



universität
wien

MASTERARBEIT

Titel der Masterarbeit

„Music in Richard Powers’ *The Time of Our Singing*“

Verfasserin

Maria Valencia Cuberos, BA

angestrebter akademischer Grad

Master of Arts (MA)

Wien, Oktober 2011

Studienkennzahl lt. Studienblatt:

A 066 844

Studienrichtung lt. Studienblatt:

Masterstudium Anglophone Literatures and Cultures

Betreuerin oder Betreuer:

Ao. Univ.-Prof. Dr. Rudolf Weiss

*To all who made this possible with your unwavering
support, patience, encouragement and help.*

1	INTRODUCTION	1
2	RICHARD POWERS' <i>THE TIME OF OUR SINGING</i>	3
2.1	RICHARD POWERS	3
2.2	THE NOVEL — PLOT STRUCTURES	5
2.3	NARRATOLOGICAL ISSUES	11
2.4	THEMES	18
2.4.1	<i>Race</i>	19
2.4.2	<i>Music</i>	21
2.4.3	<i>Time</i>	23
3	THEORY OF INTERMEDIALITY	25
3.1	LITERATURE REVIEW	25
3.2	CLASSIFICATION AND TERMINOLOGY	35
3.2.1	<i>Formal and structural analogies</i>	35
3.2.2	<i>Theme and Variation</i>	36
3.2.3	<i>Rondo</i>	37
3.2.4	<i>Polyphony and counterpoint</i>	37
3.2.5	<i>'Word music' and 'verbal music'</i>	44
3.3	THE TIME OF OUR SINGING AS AN EXAMPLE OF MUSICALIZED FICTION?	46
4	MUSICAL STRUCTURES IN THE TEXT	57
4.1	(THEME AND) VARIATIONS	58
4.2	RONDO	65
4.3	POLYPHONY, COUNTERPOINT AND FUGUE	66
5	MUSIC AND ITS INFLUENCES	79
5.1	MUSIC(IANS) AND THE INFLUENCE ON THE CONSTRUCTION OF REALITY	79
5.1.1	<i>Works, composers and performance</i>	79
5.1.2	<i>Musicians</i>	85
5.2	MUSIC AND ITS INFLUENCE ON THE FORMATION OF IDENTITY	92
6	LANGUAGE AND MUSIC	98
7	CONCLUSION	102
8	TABLE OF FIGURES	104
9	BIBLIOGRAPHY	105
10	APPENDIX	108
11	INDEX	119
	ABSTRACTS	120
	CURRICULUM VITAE	122

1 Introduction

Music and literature have always been two closely related art forms. The more apparent manifestations of this relation would be the genres of sacred music, operas or musicals. For centuries, musicians have inspired writers to add words to their compositions, and writers have inspired musicians to compose pieces for their literary creations. However, this thesis aims at going beyond this aspect of the relationship between music and literature and explore the connection between music and literature in a novel, a literary form which is not traditionally linked to music.

The hypothesis which will be tested in this thesis is that the role of music in Richard Powers' novel *The Time of our Singing* goes beyond mere referencing but is in fact essential to the novel in terms of plot, language and structure. This can be seen on various levels in the text, beginning with simple musical metaphors and the constant thematic discussion of musical topics, up to the structure of the novel as a whole. Furthermore, it will be argued that the frequent incorporation of names of composers, pieces of music and non-fictional musicians aids in the construction of reality. The aim of this thesis is to describe on which levels this connection between music and literature can be found, how it is used to support the plots and to create a realistic portrayal of the musical landscape of the time.

This paper has been divided into five main sections. The first one is concerned with Richard Powers, the plot structures and narratological issues of *The Time of our Singing*, as well as the novel's main themes. The second part gives an overview of the research on the topic of music and literature, and special

attention is devoted to the theoretical frameworks established by the literary theorists Werner Wolf and Steven Paul Scher. The terminology is largely based on the works by Wolf and Scher, and where appropriate, criticism and discussions on their approaches are included. In addition to this, some musical concepts are explained, in particular the musical forms "theme and variation", "rondo", "polyphony" and "counterpoint." To conclude this section it has been attempted to apply Wolf's theory of musicalized fiction to *The Time of our Singing*, with the intention to test whether an implementation of his system is in fact possible. In the third chapter it is argued that the structure of *The Time of our Singing* is influenced by musical forms, and a specific emphasis is given to the possibility of recreating polyphony and counterpoint in a prose text. In the fourth section, the effects music and the musicians have on the construction of reality in the novel are explored. In addition, the influence music has on the formation of the identities of the characters, is investigated. The last part illustrates the relationship of music and language in *The Time of our Singing*, focusing on the description of music and literary figures influenced by music.

2 Richard Powers' *The Time of our Singing*

2.1 Richard Powers

Richard S. Powers was born in 1957 in Evanston, Illinois. He spent part of his youth in Bangkok, Thailand, where he also developed a love for music — not only was he an accomplished singer, but he also played cello, guitar, clarinet and saxophone. From an early age he had a keen interest in science, and therefore started to study Physics at the University of Illinois, which he entered in 1975. However, shortly afterwards he decided to switch his major to English, because he did not want to have to specialise as rigorously as it would have been necessary for him in the field of physics. He received his Master of Arts in 1980, but decided not to pursue a Ph.D., again because of his dislike of excessive specialisation.

Upon finishing his studies, he moved to Boston and worked as a computer programmer and data processor, but remained passionate about literature, reading in his spare time. After seeing a photograph of three farmers on a way to a dance in a photo exhibition, he quit his job to concentrate on writing his first novel, *Three Farmers on Their Way to a Dance*, saying that “all of [his] previous year's random reading just consolidated and converged on this one moment, this image, which seemed to me to [be] the birth photograph of the twentieth century” (Powers in Dewey 8). It took Powers two years to finish the novel, and he realised that it might be possible for him to make a living from writing. Later on he moved to the Netherlands, where he also finished his second novel, *Prisoner's Dilemma*.

Still living in the Netherlands, he wrote *The Gold Bug Variations*, probably his best-known novel, which was published in 1991. The title invokes both Johann Sebastian Bach's Goldberg Variations and Edgar Allan Poe's *The Gold-Bug*. Powers' deep interest in music is already evident in this text, as the Goldberg Variations are not only relevant for the title but indeed for the entire text. On the one hand, Bach's composition appears in the text and plays a central role in the life of the novel's main character. On the other hand, Powers attempts to incorporate musical structures into the text. His next novel, *Operation Wandering Soul* was published two years later. In 1992 he moved back to the United States, where he had been offered a position as writer-in-residence at the University of Illinois.

At the university, he wrote his novel *Galatea 2.2*, a story based on the Pygmalion myth. His next novel, *Gain* was published in 1998, and it won the James Fenimore Cooper Prize for Best Historical Fiction in 1999. In continuation of his prolific writing career *Plowing the Dark* was published in 2000.

The novel that forms the basis of this thesis, *The Time of our Singing*, was published in 2003 and it is his eighth novel. Three years later, *The Echo Maker* won a National Book Award and was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction. His latest novel, *Generosity: An Enhancement* was published in September 2009.

Powers still remains at the University of Illinois, and is a professor of English there. He also is a part of the Beckman Institute Cognitive Neuroscience group. In April 2010 he was elected a member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters. He is also a Fellow of the MacArthur Foundation, and of the

American Academy of Arts and Sciences (cf. Dewey *Understanding* 1-14).

2.2 The novel — plot structures

In short, *The Time of our Singing* can be described as a novel about music, race and time. It is a family saga relating mainly the story of the Daley-Strom household – the story of an interracial couple and their musically gifted children facing the dilemma of being coloured in America in the second half of the twentieth century.

The novel's primary plot is centred around the two brothers Jonah and Joseph, and to a lesser extent also their younger sister Ruth. The three children are born between 1941 and 1945, and their parents wish to raise them "beyond" race, with music as their highest ideal. They want their children to be able to choose their "affiliation" when they are old enough. However, this turns out to be near impossible in a country where their children were automatically labelled as "coloured" at their birth. The decision not to raise the children "black" also poses a constant source of friction between both family members and other members of society. All three children show extraordinary musical talent from an extremely young age onward, and Jonah, being the one with the most exceptional voice, is sent to Boylston Academy in Boston to receive "proper" training at the age of ten. Joseph follows him a year later, but focuses more on playing the piano than singing while Ruth remains home with their parents and, in contrast to her brothers, is not home-schooled but attends a public school. After their mother's death

in a fire, the two brothers return home and later on are both accepted at the Juilliard School, where they continue their musical education. The starting point of Jonah's career is when he wins the prestigious "America's Next Voice" competition, after which he has a successful run of concerts across the United States and is promptly offered a record contract, all the while insisting that Jonah must remain his accompanist. While they are recording their first album in Los Angeles, the Watts Riots of 1965 break out and they find themselves caught in the middle, and once more they have the problem that they are considered to be too light to be black, yet too dark to be white. This scene already foreshadows that decades later, Jonah will become involved in another riot in the same area, and in consequence also die from an injury he sustains in the commotion. An additional factor which connects the scenes is that in the Watts Riots, a rather light-skinned man smears Jonah's coat with brown paint. In the scene set in the 1992 Los Angeles Riots, Jonah is handed a bucket of paint and a brush and starts to paint people. Therefore it can be assumed that this is one of the scenes in the novel where events set in different times seem to be colliding, which is an aspect which will be discussed in more detail further on in this thesis.

Shortly after, David informs Jonah and Joseph that Ruth has left and is nowhere to be found. In fact, she had joined the Black Panthers and married another activist, Robert Rider, as Joseph finds out at a meeting with her. There he is informed about Ruth's suspicions that their mother's death had not been an accident but an attack, and it becomes evident that especially her father's unwillingness to talk about her mother and to

accept this possibility is one of the reasons why she had broken with him. Shortly after, Jonah is offered a residency at a festival in Germany, and although he wants Joseph to join him, Joseph remains in the United States out of worry for his father and sister. While Jonah decides to remain in Europe, Joseph moves to Atlantic City and becomes a bar pianist. He falls in love with a white girl who even urges him to get married, yet the adversity his parents had to face for being a mixed-race couple seems to keep him from accepting her proposal. David falls ill and dies of pancreatic cancer and Joseph stops working altogether. However, a call from Jonah asking Joseph to join him in Belgium in his newly-formed renaissance music a cappella group puts Joseph back in the position of being needed by his brother, and he leaves for Europe. The a cappella group, *Voces Antiquae*, becomes rather successful, they tour extensively through Europe and one of their recordings even leads to some controversy in musical circles. However, when Joseph is informed that Ruth's husband Robert had been killed, he decides to go back and support his sister against Jonah's wishes.

Meanwhile, Ruth had reconnected with their mother's family and is also staying at their grandfather's house in Philadelphia with her two young boys. Later on he moves to Oakland with Ruth, where she opens a school and Joseph becomes the music teacher. Although Jonah returns to the United States for some concerts, it is only years later on another tour that he meets his sister again. There he also meets the younger one of his nephews, Robert Junior, and bestows him with an African nickname – Ode – because he felt that the boy needed one. After this family reunion, Jonah travels to Los Angeles and dies

after being injured in the abovementioned riot. At the very end of the novel, Joseph and his two nephews take part in the Million Man March in Washington, D.C., where Ode gets lost and is found by two people: a young black woman and a German immigrant. In fact, it is implied that these two people are his own grandparents who are at the Marian Anderson concert at the Lincoln Memorial in 1939. This indicates that time is to be seen as circular rather than linear, which will be discussed in more detail later on.

The novel's secondary plot is concerned with the history of the Daley family from the time they were freed from slavery up to Delia meeting and later on marrying David Strom. The story of the Daleys begins with the liberation of Delia's great-great-grandfather, the slave James Daley in 1843. Because he settles in Philadelphia with his former owner and becomes a barber, he is not exposed to the same problems liberated slaves have in the South, and is therefore able to provide his children with more than he himself had. His grandson, Nathaniel, is even able to attend college. He becomes a chemist and opens his own pharmacy. Nathaniel's son, William Daley, has still more opportunities and becomes a doctor. He opens a family practice in Philadelphia and turns into a highly respected member of the community. He marries Nettie Ellen Alexander, and they have five children of whom Delia is the eldest. William's expectations for Delia are very high, and her wish to become a professional singer is a source of conflict between father and daughter for a long time. However, when Delia is rejected at the city's leading music academy because of her skin colour, he encourages her to fight for her dream, even if

they both know that she would never be able to live up to her full potential. The turning point in Delia's life is when she attends Marian Anderson's concert at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C., on Easter Sunday of 1939. There she meets the German immigrant David Strom, a Jewish physicist who fled from the Nazis. They begin a conversation, which becomes longer than especially Delia had intended it to be, because they find a lost little boy and help him find his family again. They connect over music, and David tells her that he wants to see her again. Although Delia's initial reaction is to reject him, he insists and after a time they start meeting, usually in New York. It is very difficult for Delia to confess to her parents that she has fallen in love with a white, Jewish man. She is met with disapproval at first, however, when she introduces David to her family, her father and David find common ground over William's interest in the recent developments in physics and thus they form a bond. After they are married, she moves to New York, and soon after gets pregnant with Jonah. The couple is characterised by their loving relationship and common love of music, and this seems to give them the strength they need to be able to tolerate all the problems they have to face for being an inter-racial couple in the early 1940s.

During the war, David is involved, however peripherally, in the development and construction of the atomic bombs, and the secrecy inherent in the project causes a slight rift between Delia and David. William and David had been in contact via letters for years, but after the bombs had been dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, William travels to New York to talk to David about them in person. This visit, however, culminates in a terrible fight

between Delia and her father, and they break off all contact. Also her mother remains loyal to her father, and therefore Delia remains completely disconnected from her family.

After Delia dies, David begins to lose his grip on reality and becomes more and more obsessed with trying to figure out the secret of time. This puts a strain on his relationship with his children, and especially alienates Ruth to the extent that she leaves and refuses to have any contact with her father again. David's madness is also illustrated by him having nightly conversations with Delia (who has been dead for many years) over cups of tea.

The third plotline of *The Time of our Singing* is the history and development of the Civil Rights Movement in the United States, although it is less of an actual plot than it is a common thread that runs through the entire novel. However, the reason why it is listed here as a subplot is mainly because of the chapter on the murder of Emmett Till and the subsequent uproar it caused in areas of the United States (cf. 95-109). At first, this chapter does not seem to be connected to the rest of the story, however, towards the end of the chapter David and Delia reappear and have a fight about whether the children should be allowed to see the picture of the corpse or not. Other elements of this plotline are, for instance, Marian Anderson's concert, Martin Luther King's speech at the Lincoln Memorial, or the Million Man March at the end of the novel.

These three plotlines are interweaved throughout the novel and are not arranged chronologically. Although in general the different chapters focus on one of these plotlines, the others are often alluded to and in many cases some events are flashed

back to or are foreshadowed. The succession of the chapters alternates between the two narrative levels, however, they are not distributed evenly. However, apart from two notable exceptions, the events of the story are related chronologically within the levels of narration. The two incidences of chapters being placed outside of the internal chronology of the narrative levels are the first chapter, titled "December 1961", which contains an account of the "America's Next Voice" competition Jonah wins, and the fourth chapter, "Easter, 1939", the Marian Anderson concert. Interestingly enough, both events are depicted in the novel more than once and carry considerable significance for the novel as a whole.

The effect of the relatively complex structure of the narration is that the reader needs to piece the individual elements together to understand the story in its entirety, and thus an arc of suspense is created. Furthermore, an analysis of the exact chapter structure, as well as its implication on the general structure of the novel can be found in section 4.3 "Polyphony, Counterpoint and Fugue".

2.3 Narratological issues

After discussing the novel's overall structure, some narratological issues will be analysed, in particular focalization and narrators, reliability, and paratextual features.

In addition to being set in different points in time, the two main narrations also have different narrators. The story of Delia and her family's background have a heterodiegetic narrator, and

Delia acts as a focalizer. The other level is Joseph's recount of his and his family's lives in the form of an autodiegetic narrator. With the exception of one chapter, the narrative situation remains consistent within the individual chapters. The moment of this narrative shift is in the chapter "August 1945" (407-427), which is concerned with the explosion of the two atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and the consequences and repercussions this event has on Delia, David and William Daley, mainly because of David's involvement in the construction and development of the bombs. William comes to visit David and Delia, after having written a long letter to David, to discuss the issue in person. However, the visit ends in an argument between Delia and her father over the issue of how to raise her children. The last paragraph by the heterodiegetic narrator is when Delia tells her boys to stop making music — something which she has never done before — and go play in their room (cf. 425). After that, the autodiegetic narrator Joseph takes over with the following words:

Past color. My mother speaks these words to my grandfather in late September of 1945. I'm three years old. What can I hope to remember?
(425)

Here one can see one of the few instances in the text where the unreliability of the narrator Joseph surfaces, as he suggests that the events might not have occurred in the way he relates them. Yet, the description of the scene that follows is highly detailed and contains an exact account of the conversation taking place. Three features of the passage stand out in particular. Firstly, there is the use of both present and future tenses to give the text a sense of immediacy and directness. Secondly, the

narrator's exact rendition of the conversation between Delia, father and David in the following way — which is neither direct nor indirect speech — makes the reader feel as if they were also present at the conversation.

Papap says, What do you think they'll learn the minute they set foot out of your house?

Mama says, Everybody's going to be mixed. No one's going to be anything.

Papap says, There is no mixed.

(426)

This short passage also stands in an interesting relationship with the quotation above, where Joseph, as narrator, calls his own reliability into question. It is rather improbable that he would remember a fairly lengthy conversation that took place when he was three years old at the time of recording, when he is, after all, more than sixty years old. Yet, although he does not seem to be unreliable, or to be telling anything but the truth at first glance, one should not forget that not all of his account can be taken at face value. The narrator even admits that he cannot recall the entire conversation a few sentences later: "More words I can't hear, can't get, can't remember. Something heated, between the two men. Worse than anger" (426). The third feature, which also contributes to this possible unreliability, is that the narrator in this scene also appears to have the cognitive limitations of a three-year old child. This is particularly evident in the paragraph following the fight, when Delia is pregnant with Ruth.

Mama is ill for a long time afterward. She is big with another baby. I watch her eat. [...] She decides to have a baby, then starts eating for two. And the baby is down there in her stomach, grabbing half the food.

(427)

At the very end of the passage, the narrator moves several decades into the future, when David is dying. For a long time, Joseph has kept asking his parents when the baby would be born, and is always told that it would be born "tomorrow". This is followed by the narrator stating that "[f]or weeks, it's never tomorrow. Then overnight, it's yesterday. All yesterday, too far back to reach. And my father is dying on a bed in Mount Sinai Hospital" (427). This repetition of expressions relating to the subject of time and the usage of prolepsis brings into focus the prominent theme of time.

Another element to discuss in connection with *The Time of our Singing* is the naming of the individual chapters. According to Werner Wolf, thematization of music in titles or chapter titles falls into the category of paratextual thematization of music (cf. Wolf *Musicalization* 56). *The Time of our Singing* contains a number of such paratextual thematizations, especially in the chapter titles of Jonah and Joseph's storyline. On the one hand, some the titles are references to specific pieces of music, such as "Bist du bei mir" (138), "In Trutina" (65), "Songs of a Wayfarer" (427) or "Meistersinger" (525), and on the other hand they refer to Jonah in a specific opera role, such as "My Brother as Hänsel" (62), "My Brother as Aeneas" (109) or "My Brother as Orpheus" (165). Although references to specific pieces are made, they do not always appear again in the text explicitly. The function of this form of thematization is to evoke a specific piece of music in the reader, and thus make them associate the content of the chapter with the music or the plot of the respective operas. In most cases, these paratextual thematizations could be classified as, what Wolf calls, evocation of music through associative

quotation (cf. Wolf 67ff.). The piece may also be referred to again within the text, either in the retelling of an actual performance within the plot, or as simple allusions to the music. The chapter titles mentioned above are connected with the content of the chapters in different ways. They can be divided into two categories: on the one hand, there are the pieces or roles which are actually performed within the novel, such as the aria *Bist du bei mir* from the "Notenbüchlein der Anna Magdalena Bach"¹, "In Trutina" from Carl Orff's *Carmina Burana*, or Jonah performing in the role of Hänsel in Engelbert Humperdinck's *Hänsel und Gretel*.

These pieces are always of great significance for the plot in the respective chapters, for instance *Bist du bei mir* is performed by Ruth at Delia's memorial, incidentally it is also the last time Ruth performs western art music for a very long time. The narrator also comments on the controversy about the authorship of the piece and mentions that "[s]he sang that learner's song, by Bach and not by Bach, the simplest tune in the world, too simple for Bach to have written it without help" (147) and also, later on calls it "that little song of Bach's that Bach never wrote" (619). It is also the piece that Ruth and Joseph perform together at Jonah's memorial service in Brussels towards the end of the novel (619). The chapter "In Trutina" (65) marks a turning point inasmuch as during a performance of this piece, Jonah's voice changes and he turns from a soprano into a tenor. In "Songs of a Wayfarer" (427), Jonah goes to Europe for the first time, yet

¹ It has long been debated whether this aria is an original composition by J. S. Bach, however nowadays the consensus seems to be that it was written by Gottfried Heinrich Stölzel (cf. Oxford Dictionary of Music "Bist du bei mir").

the main focus is not on Jonah and his travels, as the title might suggest, but rather on Joseph and his time without Jonah.

The titles of the chapters called "My Brother as ..." serve a rather easily definable purpose, however their classification poses a certain difficulty. The problem is that the quotations, i.e.

"Orpheus" or "Aeneas", are not textual quotes from the libretto proper, which would be necessary if this quotation were to be considered to be a case of intermediality. From the context, one can assume that Powers is referring not just to the fictional or mythological characters of Orpheus, Aeneas or Otello (238), but to the opera roles. This hypothesis is supported by the fact that one of the chapters is called "My Brother as Otello", where the Italian spelling is used instead of the English "Othello" to indicate that the referent is Verdi's opera *Otello* and not Shakespeare's play *Othello*. As the reference is to the characters within the opera, and this is a form of quotation from another text, it would be more appropriate to classify them as intertextual rather than intermedial references. However, Wolf's concept of evocation through associative quotation is also helpful in examining the function of these chapter titles. Here it has to be said that the mentioning of said characters works on two level. On the one hand, a reader familiar with the opera might think of the opera, and maybe also specific pieces of music from the opera itself, and might also associate it with the plot of the opera. On the other hand, if a reader is either unfamiliar with the opera, or more familiar with the myth or play the character is taken from, they might make the connection with the chapter based on their knowledge of the text. The chapter title "My Brother as ..." functions as a form of invitation

to a specific reading of the chapter: if the reader knows that Jonah is, for instance, supposed to be Orpheus in a chapter, they might look for clues that he is an exceptional singer who could probably even charm a stone, or that he has lost a loved one, probably paired with a metaphorical descent into the underworld. However, the most obvious allusion to the Orpheus myth can be found in the last paragraph of the chapter where the narrator, Joseph, says

But I stray close enough to that stilled spot to hear what prize my brother means to win. All music is just a means to him, toward that one end. In the timeless time it takes him to reach the cadence, the song starts to work. She rises up behind him, following, just as the gods promised. But in the thrill of his tune's victory, Jonah forgets the ban, and looks back. And in his joy-cracked face as he turns around, I see him watch as Mama disappears.
(216)

In this case, it is Delia who takes on the role of Eurydice, and in this last sentence, it becomes clear why the chapter is titled "My Brother as Orpheus". Furthermore, this reference to the Orpheus myth might not be as obvious if it were not for the title, because then the reader would not be actively looking for indications that would justify the title, and then this particular myth would not be as easily retrieved from memory. It is also interesting to note that this one chapter is the only one where it is not clear which opera the role is taken from, as there are a rather large number of operatic treatments of the Orpheus myth, although the emphases are put on different parts of the myth. Within the chapter there is also a list of a selection of composers who treated the material, and thereby it becomes clear that it is not one specific Orpheus Jonah is intended to be, but that he

rather represents the mythical figure itself, as it can be seen in the following quotation.

[Jonah] sang every tune as if it were his swan song. He could make stones weep and guiltless animals die of shame: the Orpheus that Peri, Monteverdi, Glück [sic], Offenbach, Krenek, and Auric had in mind.
(193)

The paratextual thematizations of music in the chapter titles are selected very carefully to guide the reader to a specific reading of the text, and to evoke a specific story or piece of music which is then firmly linked to the text in the reader's mind and therefore also makes the text more memorable.

2.4 Themes

Although it may initially seem reductive, *The Time of our Singing* can be narrowed down to three themes: race, time, and music. All three elements are always present throughout the novel, although in varying intensity. It is because of this constant presence of several independent themes that *The Time of our Singing* has a certain contrapuntal feeling to it. However, the idea of counterpoint within music will be discussed in more detail in a later chapter.

2.4.1 Race

This section is concerned with an analysis of the concepts of race, music and time and, more importantly, how these concepts are used within this thesis.

In the *Oxford Dictionary of English*, "race" is defined as

each of the major divisions of humankind, having distinct physical characteristics; the fact or condition of belonging to a racial division or group; the qualities or characteristics associated with this; a group of people sharing the same culture, history, language, etc.

In *The Time of our Singing*, "race" is mainly connected with African Americans and their struggle for equality, especially during the latter half of the twentieth century. In the novel, the history of African Americans starts with the liberation of the slaves, more particularly the freeing of James Daley in 1843, and therefore the foundation of the Daley family. Throughout the novel, many of the most pivotal events in the struggle for racial equality and civil rights are featured, sometimes as a central point in the plot, such as Marian Anderson's concert and the case surrounding the murder of Emmett Till. At other times they are only mentioned in passing.

Another very important issue is the negotiation of race and ethnicity. As it was mentioned before, the Stroms are a mixed-race family, Delia is black, David is white – but he is Jewish and therefore is not accepted as being a member of the majority by the white majority, who identify white as Anglo-Saxon and protestant. In a fight with Ruth she accuses him of being white, to which he answers "I'm not a white man, I'm a Jew!" (304). Here it becomes clear that both parents belong to minorities,

but that only the mother is visibly part of a minority, while to an outsider the father does not appear to be a member of a minority group to an outsider. In the quotation above it becomes apparent that Ruth argues on a racial level and bases her argument on David's visible racial markers, that is, him being Caucasian. David, on the other hand, argues from an ethnic standpoint and seems to equate being white with being a so-called WASP (White Anglo-Saxon Protestant), and therefore does not see himself as being "white".

For David the ethnic element of him being "white" is important, as he is Caucasian, but not Anglo-Saxon or Protestant, and therefore does not fit the concept of a "WASP". However, in the context of the United States it is important to note that, while ethnicity is to a certain degree a private issue, the question of the membership of a particular race is a public issue, as, next to name and gender, race is one of the checkboxes present in almost any survey.

Jonah, Joseph and Ruth are too light to be black and too dark to be white, which becomes a problem for them at various stages of their lives. They are constantly outsiders, as both racial groups in turn assume that they are members of the other. At the same time, because of their parents' attempt to raise them without awareness or negotiation of race at home, the siblings do not identify with either race and seek acceptance without being seen as belonging to a racial group.

2.4.2 Music

To offer a dictionary definition of the word “music” might seem redundant, as there does not appear to be too much controversy about the definition of music — genres of popular music that already call themselves “Noise” and the like aside. However, to minimise differences of interpretation, a definition is offered.

music

the art or science of combining vocal or instrumental sounds (or both) to produce beauty of form, harmony, and expression of emotion – *New Oxford American Dictionary*, “music”

As it has been pointed out before, music is an integral element in *The Time of our Singing*, which is why some exploration of the music used within the novel is helpful. However, this section should rather be seen as an introduction, a much closer investigation of the music can be found in chapter 5.1

“Music(ians) and the influence on the construction of reality”.

Although a great number of musical genres can be found in *The Time of our Singing*, the main focus is on Western art music.

However, it must be added to this that there is a very varied representation of different periods of European music. US-American music is not ignored either, and both composers and performers of “classical” as well as of “popular” music are featured. Therefore the range of music with which the reader is required to have some degree of familiarity in order to understand every single musical reference is rather extensive. The referencing goes as far as having chapters named after characters in operas, such as “My Brother as Aeneas” (109),

after Henry Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*, or even more obscure, as in one conversation in which Jonah talks about making a "pilgrimage to the Thomaskirche" (406)².

Nevertheless, *The Time of our Singing* displays a deeper connection with music than mere referencing would allow; a great number of passages contain long and detailed descriptions of performances, compositions, music lessons and practice sessions, amongst others. In short, music and the lives of musicians does not only form the framework of the novel, they arguably constitute the majority of the plot.

The racial conflict does also stretch into the area of music, as the difference between "black" and "white" music is a constant point of friction. To Ruth, and to other African Americans, the fact that Jonah, and Joseph in conjunction, almost exclusively perform music written by European men is seen as a betrayal, and they are heavily criticised for it. Yet at the same time, Jonah dislikes the fact that he is commonly labelled as the "Black/African-American/Negro Tenor" by critics and audience alike, and strives to be seen as apart from his race. This wish of being seen "beyond" his race reflects his upbringing.

² To understand the significance of the Thomaskirche in Leipzig, the reader needs to know that Johann Sebastian Bach was the Cantor and Director of Music in Leipzig, and especially at the Thomaskirche, from 1723 until his death in 1750. As he is also buried in the church, it can be said that it has basically become a site of pilgrimage.

2.4.3 Time

The third theme of the novel, as said before, is time. It is an explicit topic in many parts of the novel, especially because David's main field of research is time. In fact, he tries to prove the circularity of time. However, it is exactly this research that ultimately undermines his sanity. The other way in which time is important within the novel is the way that the notion of circular time is used as a narrative device.

To understand David's approach to time, some definitions and observations are called for. To begin with, in the 2nd edition of the OED, time in its unlimited sense is defined as an "indefinite continuous duration regarded as that in which the sequence of events takes place" (OED, "time" meaning 24).

In the *Encyclopædia Britannica Macropedia*, the entry for "time" begins with the following explanation:

One facet of human consciousness is the awareness of time. Humans feel the passage of time in their personal experience and observe it in their environment. Time, as experienced, is a one-way flow at a pace that is slow enough to be perceptible. (Actually, only material fluids flow; but, like psychic experiences in general, that of time can be described only in the language of material phenomena.) People feel, think, and act in the time flow.

David is a follower of Einstein's theory of the space-time continuum. In fact, Einstein even appears briefly as a character within the novel, as one of David's colleagues and a fellow musician. However, to explain the concept of time in an easily understandable manner is very difficult because of the abstract and impenetrable of the subject. The more one thinks about it, the more obscure it becomes. This is probably also one of the

reasons for David's madness in the end. Another quote from the *Encyclopædia Britannica Macropedia* illustrates this problem quite well.

Time appears to be more puzzling than space because it seems to flow or pass or else people seem to advance through it. But the passage or advance seems to be unintelligible. The question of how many seconds per second time flows (or one advances through it) is obviously an absurd one, for it suggests that the flow or advance comprises a rate of change with respect to something else — to a sort of hypertime. But if hypertime itself flows, then a hyper-hypertime is required, and so on, ad infinitum. Again, if the world is thought of as spread out in space-time, it might be asked whether human consciousness advances up a timelike direction of this world, and if so, how fast; whether future events pop into existence as the "now" reaches them or are there all along; and how such changes in space-time can be represented, since time is already within the picture.

This passage already illustrates that the definition of the concept of time, when one tries to go into detail, becomes rather complicated. It is, however, not within the scope of this thesis to go into a deeper elaboration of the nature of time.

3 Theory of intermediality

3.1 Literature review

The relationship between words and music has been a growing field of research for the last decades for literary scholars as well as for scholars of comparative literature and musicologists. The literature available in the field deals with an extensive range of topics, including research into poetry and music, opera, the influence of literature on (instrumental) music, and, most important for this thesis, music and prose literature (or more specifically, novels). A comprehensive listing of publications within the field can be found on the homepage of the *International Association for Word and Music Studies (WMA)*, which was founded in 1997.³ This is an organization which “promote[s] transdisciplinary scholarly inquiry devoted to the relations among literature, verbal texts, language and music” and

[aims] to coordinate the manifold activities in the field and to provide an international forum for musicologists and literary scholars with interest(s) in interart/intermedial studies, crossing cultural boundaries and expanding traditional disciplinary categories.
(wordmusicstudies.org)

However, in the following section only the publications concerned with the representation of music in novels will be discussed in more detail. Among the many scholars publishing in this area, one stands out in particular, namely Werner Wolf. His important book *The Musicalization of Fiction: A Study in the Theory and History of Intermediality* (1999) is the only

³ The list can be found on <http://wordmusicstudies.org/member.htm> (accessed 20 June 2011)

contribution to the field in which the construction of a comprehensive theory of the possible incorporations of music into prose literature is attempted. At the centre of his study is the development of a definition and typology for musico-literary intermediality and for the musicalization of fiction.

The following diagram shows Wolf's typology of musico-literary studies as well as of musico-literary intermediality. The diagram "consists of Scher's system (part A) and [his] own modifications (part B, in which the emphasis is on 'music in literature' and especially on 'music in fiction)'" (Wolf 69).

diagram III:

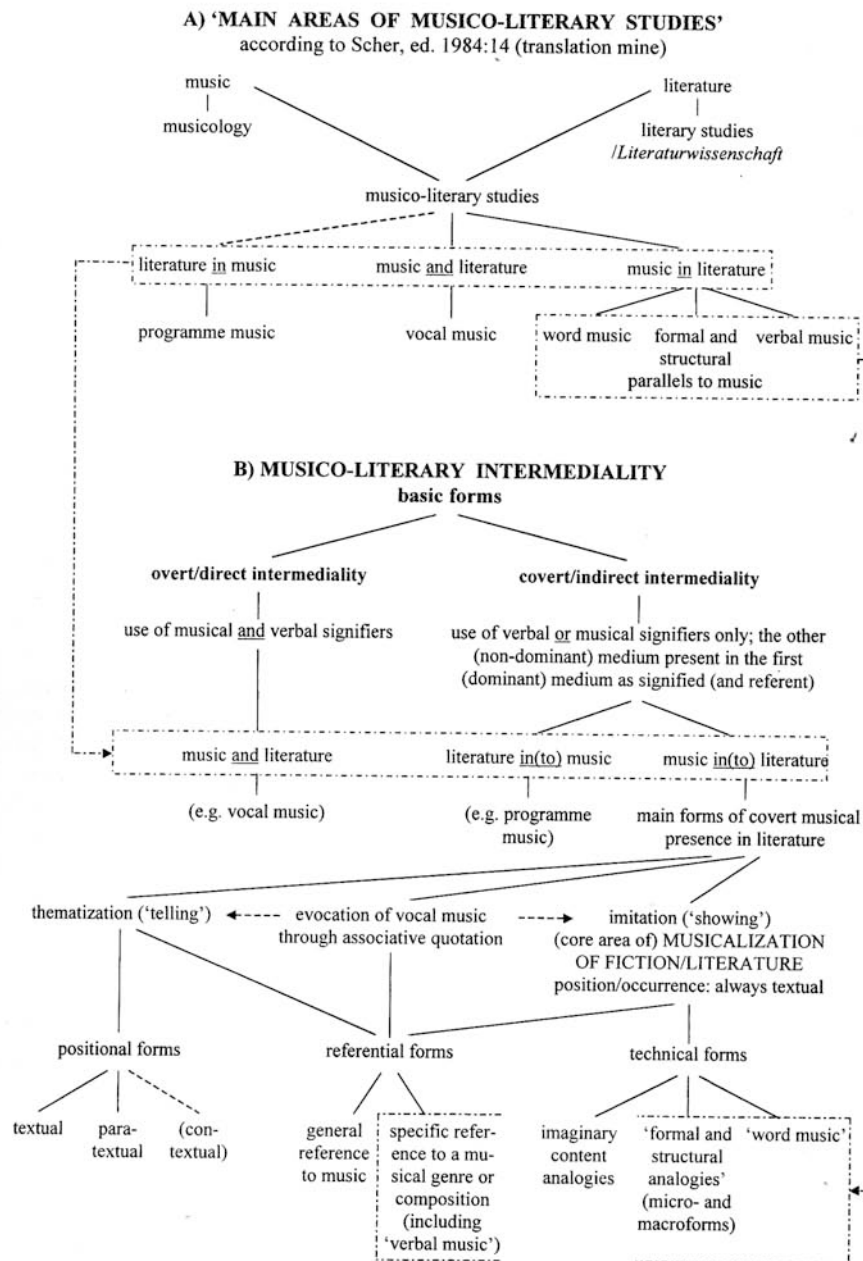


fig. 1 Wolf 70

As the typological setting of the area of musico-literary intermediality, and the study of literature and music in general, is rather complex, this diagram illustrates the relations between the individual phenomena and therefore makes it more comprehensible. Furthermore, it also shows the different ways music may be incorporated into literature. The diagram

concludes Wolf's sections on the classification, definition and typology of intermediality and, especially, musico-literary intermediality, and is followed by a section on "How to recognize a musicalized fiction when reading one." The criteria set forth in this, for the lack of a better word, guide to recognizing musicalized fiction, will be applied to Powers' *The Time of our Singing* in a later section of this thesis.

In the historical section of the book, Wolf provides an analysis of several English texts, mainly novels, and applies his theories to these works. The works analysed are Thomas De Quincey's "Dream Fugue" (1849), the "Sirens" episode from Joyce's *Ulysses* (1922), Virginia Woolf's "The String Quartet" (1921), Aldous Huxley's *Point Counter Point* (1928), Samuel Beckett's "Ping" (1967), Anthony Burgess's *Napoleon Symphony* (1974) and Gabriel Josipovici's "Fuga" (1987). Wolf's stated aim in respect of his historical treatment is to "provide a contribution to the history of intermediality in narrative literature [and] give an overview of significant attempts at a musicalization of fiction since romanticism" (Wolf 7). As in many similar publications, his book only covers a small number of texts selected from English and Anglo-Irish literature, "in order not to swell the present volume to undue dimensions, but also because [they furnish] particularly graphic examples" (ibid.). Furthermore, he points out that the

emphasis [is] on the interpretation of some exemplary texts [...] and on the functional profile that may emerge from them rather than on an exhaustive enumeration of musicalized fictions in the history of English literature.
(ibid.)

Here, and as it will become apparent from the review of books on the topic by other authors, it has to be pointed out that there seems to be far more research on the treatment of English and Anglo-Irish literature in relation to the representation of music within prose texts, than on American literature.

Although Wolf's work is indispensable for the writing of this thesis, it is necessary to point out that the theoretical framework he presents is rather restrictive in some cases, and therefore does not lend itself to unhindered application to literary works not already discussed by him. However, the practical applicability of his criteria of the musicalization of fiction will be tested later in this chapter.

The next important theoretician is Steven Paul Scher, and of his many writings the book *Verbal Music in German Literature* (1968) and his article "Notes toward a Theory of Verbal Music" (1970) proved to be especially relevant for this thesis. It is his treatment of the classification of phenomena and the development of a terminology in particular, which stand out. The terminologies taken from his work are "verbal music", "word music", and "formal and structural analogies", and will be discussed in detail in the following chapter. However, the main topic in his book is the treatment of German literature, and its main aim is not to establish a theory but to analyse the chosen texts according to the features discussed in his introduction. His article "Theory of Verbal Music", on the other hand, is concerned exactly with this task, as the title already suggests, and was therefore more useful for forming the theoretical basis of this thesis. Scher writes that his text is focussed

on a hitherto largely neglected aspect of the problem of music in literature, the phenomenon of verbal music. Using the definition developed in my *Verbal Music in German Literature* [...] as a point of departure, I shall attempt to locate verbal music in a systematic typology accommodating related musico-literary phenomena which employ language as their primary medium of expression and to suggest the most important distinctions between literary and nonliterary approaches to verbal evocation of music.
(Scher *Theory* 149)

In this article, he locates his evocation of music in the following diagram, which forms the basis of the one used by Wolf (see fig. 1).

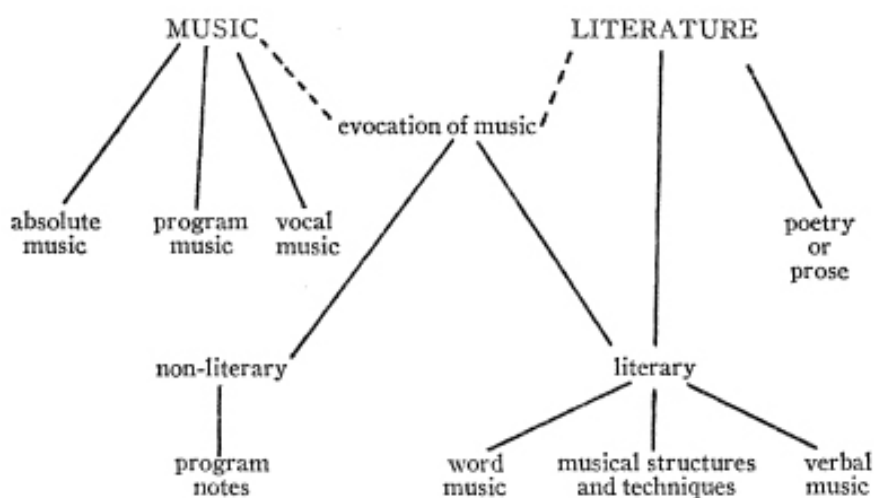


fig. 2 Scher Typology (*Theory* 151)

As one can see, his diagram is far less detailed, and on first glance also less complicated and therefore easier to understand. However, the great advantage of Wolf's diagram lies exactly in these details, because he presents far more possibilities for the representation of music within literature. Although his approach towards a theory of certain phenomena is very useful, some parts of it have been heavily criticised, especially also by Werner Wolf. A more detailed discussion of

the distinction between "word music" and "verbal music" can be found in the section 3.2.5 'Word music' and 'verbal music'.

Despite the fact that both Scher and Wolf refer back to the classification of structural and formal analogies made by Horst Petri in his volume *Literatur und Musik: Form- und Strukturparallelen* (1964), this book has proved to be too specific in the discussion of certain examples and too vague on the formation of theories, especially theories which could be applied to the Powers' *The Time of our Singing*, to be of sufficient use for this thesis.

In the last five years, three books about the treatment of music in (contemporary) literature have been published, which shows that there is still much research waiting to be done in this field. First, there is Stephen Benson's *Literary Music: Writing Music in Contemporary Fiction* (2006). As in the title, he uses the term "literary music" for the fictional representations of music he chooses to describe. He argues that

literary music refers in the first instance to the self-evident fact that such music is by definition literary, a music made by the narrative in which it occurs, regardless of whether or not it exists outside the text [...]. The central point of such music is not the success or otherwise of the evocation, but the nature of the performance: the question of how and why music is staged, and to what desired end.

(Benson 4)

His work differs from that of others in the sense that his book "is not a study of any of the ways in which narrative literature has sought to model itself after music, or on particular musical properties" (Benson 5), which is exactly one of the main points of inquiry proposed by Werner Wolf. About this exact contrast Benson writes that the approach taken by traditional musico-

literary studies is “unapologetically formalist” and unnecessar[ily] preoccup[ied] with the question of verification” of the musicality of a certain text, and that “the resulting typologies, most extensively displayed in the work of Werner Wolf, have been impressive, but [...] severely limiting” (cf. Benson 5). His focus, as a matter of fact, is not on “how, in the technical sense, but why” music is represented, “to what end, and how does it relate to other discourses of music, including musicology” (Benson 6). Although this is certainly a very valid and also interesting approach to the topic of the representation of music in fiction, it stands too far apart from the remainder of the literature to be of practical value for this thesis, and is therefore only touched upon.

In 2008, Gerry Smyth published the book *Music in Contemporary British Fiction: Listening to the Novel*. What makes this book stand out is that the author makes a decided break with the conventional discussion of classical music in literature, and covers a wider range of genres, both musical and literary, than any other of the books written on the subject. On the one hand, he does cover widely discussed works, such as the “Sirens” episode from *Ulysses* (1922), Huxley’s *Point Counter Point* (1928), Lawrence Sterne’s *Tristram Shandy* (1760-67) and Burgess’ *Mozart and the Wolf Gang* (1991), but, on the other hand, he also includes works published as late as 2007. He also approaches the vast array of novels he discusses from different perspectives. At first, he discusses music-novels in theory and practice by dividing the field into “Music as Inspiration”, “Music as Metaphor” and “Music and Form”. He then discusses the role and representation of music in a number of British novels, and

closes by writing about some contemporary texts. What is interesting here is that he divides them into two groups: on the one side, there is “musical genre in the novel”, and on the other side there is “music and the genres of fiction”. The musical genres he includes are Folk, Jazz, Pop, Rock, Hip-Hop, Dance, World, and Classical. The genres of fiction are Adolescent, Graphic, Celebrity, Fantasy, Science, Thriller, Crime, and Biographical. In the end he also writes about the uses of music in the contemporary British novels, and the themes he offers here are history, nostalgia, silence, and love. Of course, one can see that he attempts to cover all possibilities of incorporating music into a novel one can imagine, however this also means that the treatment of each novel is only very brief and does not allow for a great depth of analysis. Furthermore, the book does not attempt to form a theoretical framework into which all of these novels fit, but rather presents analyses in terms of the existing theories and also offers some criticism in this context. However, this does not necessarily reduce the benefits of the book, as its aim is in no way the creation of a new theoretical framework. A significant point in favour of Smyth's book is that it covers the field of the representation of music and the entire spectrum which this field of research offers and can therefore be considered a very useful book to introduce the discipline.

The most recent of the three publications is Alan Shockley's *Music in the Words: Musical Form and Counterpoint in the Twentieth-Century Novel* (2009). As the title already implies, his study focuses on the possibilities of the use of counterpoint as a representation of music within literature. Although he draws on the insights presented by Wolf, amongst others, and writes that

he “ha[s] found many of these critical works helpful in [his] own study, [he] hope[s] to bring a different, musicological, perspective to a very limited number of literary works,” and also sets out the main theme of his writing as being the “analyses of the authors’ borrowings from musical technique and structure in order to shape their works” (Shockley 7). It is interesting to note that Shockley, unlike the other authors, is not a literary scholar but actually a composer and music theorist by profession (cf. <http://www.music.princeton.edu/~alan/>), which also explains his somewhat different approach to the topic. As in almost all other works discussed here, the “Sirens” episode from *Ulysses* is once more analysed for its polyphonic structure. Although in Shockley’s work no formation of a theoretical framework or typology is attempted, the book has been very useful for gaining new insights into the phenomenon of polyphony within literature.

The last work to be discussed here is Meike Reher’s recent dissertation on “Die Darstellung von Musik im zeitgenössischen englischen und amerikanischen Bildungsroman: Peter Ackroyd, Vikram Seth, Richard Powers, Frank Conroy, Paul Auster” (2010). This book was especially interesting for this thesis, because it is the only piece of secondary literature which discusses *The Time of our Singing* in the context of music. Here the focus is, on the one hand, the Bildungsroman in British and American literature, and on the other hand, the representation of music in this particular genre. In her theoretical approach, she relies strongly on Werner Wolf’s typology and definitions, and her analysis of the novel is centred on the identification of contrapuntal elements as well as the importance of the selection of music.

The other novels she analyses in her volume are Peter Ackroyd's *English Music* (1992), Vikram Seth's *An Equal Music* (1999), Frank Conroy's *Body and Soul* (1993) and Paul Auster's *The Music of Chance* (1990). A point of criticism is that, especially in her theoretical chapters, she touches on several issues, but fails to deliver a satisfactory coverage of the issue or to provide any conclusions.

3.2 Classification and terminology

3.2.1 Formal and structural analogies

Formal and structural analogies' are the terms conventionally used by analysts to describe the literary device of employing structural elements in prose writing which are judged to be parallel, or analogous to musical forms. Wolf argues that they occur when "music emerges as a signified with respect to music as a **form**" (Wolf 58). He elaborates on his definition by proposing that

formal analogies may also, if not primarily, affect the signifieds and the structure resulting from their combination, though verbal signifiers may be involved in some cases, too. Formal analogies operate on the levels of textual materiality, phonology, syntax and particularly on the semantic level and may exploit both specifically literary discursive devices giving the impression of patterns suggestive of musical forms and devices giving the impression of 'polyphonic' simultaneity. [...] The effect may be the imitation of musical **microforms** and compositional devices, such as echo, ostinato, thematic variation, modulation, polyphony etc., as well as the imitation of **macroforms** or musical genres, such as the fugue or the sonata.
(Wolf 58)

In addition to this, Scher points out that a structural or formal analogy is never an exact representation which is immediately obvious but that it has to be decoded, and adds that

[i]n terms of musico-literary practise, decoding here means recognition and interpretation of certain corresponding formal designs and organizing strategies in literature that create the impression of comparable progressive movement.
(Scher *Music and Literature* 231)

In this thesis a number of such structural analogies will be examined more closely.

3.2.2 Theme and Variation

The entry on variations in the *Grove Music Online* offers the following definitions.

A form founded on repetition, and as such an outgrowth of a fundamental musical and rhetorical principle, in which a discrete theme is repeated several or many times with various modifications. [...]

When the theme is a self-contained sectional structure, such as a small two-reprise form, its repetitions result in a strophic form in which some elements of the theme change and others remain the same; this is known as 'theme and variations'.

The idea of having a theme and succeeding repetitions is probably the musical form that could be found in a literary text most easily. The representation of theme and variations therefore falls into the category of 'formal and structural analogies'.

3.2.3 Rondo

The *rondo*, or French *rondeau*, is a very popular form in music. It is defined by the *Grove Dictionary of Music* as a piece of music

consisting of a series of sections, the first of which (the main section or refrain) recurs, normally in the home key, between subsidiary sections (couplets, episodes) before returning finally to conclude, or round off, the composition (ABAC ... A).

Although it has to be admitted that a structural or formal analogy to a rondo is indeed more suited to poetry than to prose, it is nevertheless possible to identify attempts to recreate the rondo form in prose literature.

3.2.4 Polyphony and counterpoint

To approach the complex issue of attempting the recreation of counterpoint and polyphony in literature, it is necessary to first define “counterpoint” in its musical sense, as this is the discipline where the term is taken from. In the *Oxford Dictionary of Music*, counterpoint is defined as

[t]he ability, unique to mus[ic], to say two things at once comprehensibly. The term derives from the expression *punctus contra punctum*, i.e. ‘point against point’ or ‘note against note’. A single ‘part’ or ‘voice’ added to another is called ‘a counterpoint’ to that other, but the more common use of the word is of the combination of simultaneous parts [...], each of significance in itself and the whole resulting in a coherent texture. In this sense Counterpoint is the same as polyphony.

An interesting point is also brought up in the entry for counterpoint in the *Oxford Companion to Music*, where it is noted that “for music to be truly contrapuntal there must always

be a balance between independence and interdependence" (Whittall, "Counterpoint"). This important point will be returned to in Section 4.3 "Polyphony, Counterpoint and Fugue."

The basic problem of locating counterpoint in literature is that, because we can only read linearly and therefore can only follow one line at once, this effect of simultaneity is hard, if not impossible, to achieve. There have been many attempts to achieve an effect of polyphony in prose, of which the "Sirens" episode in Joyce's *Ulysses* is probably the most prominent and also the most frequently treated in scholarly enquiry, and yet it is impossible to create genuine polyphony in literature.

Amongst the attempts to incorporate musical structures into prose literature, polyphony is the structure most discussed in the literature, yet upon a closer look, one can notice that there seems to be a distinct lack of clearly formulated definitions of the application of the concept of polyphony to prose literature.

To begin with, two different approaches to polyphony in literature can be distinguished. The first is the one taken by Mikhael Bakhtin, which is analysed in Sue Vice's book *Introducing Bakhtin*. Vice argues that in the Bakhtinian sense, polyphony "refers precisely to the construction of the voices and characters and narrator in the novel, as its etymology — the Greek for 'many voices' — suggests," and that

Bakhtin argues that characters and narrators are known by their voices, rather than by any other features, within a text, and it is the way in which these voices are arranged that determines whether or not a work is polyphonic.

(Vice 112)

This approach, however, describes only one very specific case of polyphony, namely when the voices of the characters are

written in a polyphonic manner and it does not include the area of structural analogies. However, this is not the only possible way to create polyphony in a prose text, and an attempt at a definition and analysis of this special technique will be made here. Although the terms 'polyphony' and 'counterpoint' are often casually used synonymously, they do not in fact mean the same. In music, a composer, or student of composition, will learn the rules of counterpoint in order to be able to write polyphonic music. Therefore, the technique is called 'counterpoint,' whereas the result of using this technique is 'polyphony'.

Another line of argument can be found in Shockley's *Music in the Words*, where he maintains that even in music there are cases of polyphony where the voices are arranged not but indeed horizontally. He argues that this musical phenomenon "already has a label" and that

it's an unfolding — the simultaneities (stacked vertically in musical space) have been sliced into separate horizontal lines, and then laid out alternating in a resultant single horizontal line (a succession). Something similar occurs frequently in music, and is exemplified by many passages of Bach's solo, non-keyboard works.

(Shockley 58)

As an example of this, he presents bars 120 – 122 from Johann Sebastian Bach's "Ciaccona" from his *Partita No. 2 in D Minor*, BWV 1004, which will also be shown and analysed here, to understand how polyphony can be represented in a solo piece.



fig. 3 Bach's Ciaccona D minor, bars 120-122

This first example is the original version as it can be found in Bach's piece. It is, as it is customary for solo (violin) music, written in a single line. Although it is laid out horizontally, one can note the descending progression D – C – B flat lies a tenth lower than the respective following notes, i.e. F – E – D. As can be seen in the following example, the descending (chord) progression essentially forms the theme of the "Ciaccona", even though the original C sharp has been changed to a C natural.



fig. 4 Ciaccona, bars 1-5

One of the characteristics of a Ciaccona is that it consists of variations on a ground bass, which is usually four or eight bars long.⁴ Although in general the bass line is repeated without alteration, there are several examples where the bass line is varied as well and only the harmonic progression remains, as is also the case in this example. If one now splits the upper and the lower strands into two separate voices, so as to make visible what is perceived by the ear, one can see that the underlying structure is in fact a polyphonic one.

⁴ "Ciaccona" is the Italian term for this musical form, also common are the French "chaconne" or in England "chacony". However, it is very similar to the "passacaglia" (also "passacaille") and the terms are often used interchangeably. Some other characteristics are its three-four time and a rather slow main tempo. For more information see *Grove Dictionary of Music* "Chaconne".



fig. 5 Ciaconna, bars 120-122 (split)

This is but one of several possible approaches to splitting this passage into several individual parts. While the upper stave shows the demisemiquaver movement almost as it appears in the original, the lower stave shows the two main voices which can be extracted from the passage. The argument here is that the demisemiquaver movement has an ornamental function rather than a harmonic one, whereas the first notes of each four-note demisemiquaver group form a triad and therefore they form the harmonic base for the passage. Although a different segmentation of these bars could certainly be argued, the proposed version already shows that even if only one line is visible, more than one line can be heard and also defined. The implication for the representation of polyphony in literature is that the basic problem, which is the impossibility of reading and decoding more than one line simultaneously, cannot be sidestepped. However, one can still argue that because in music polyphony can be discerned even in horizontal figures, the idea of polyphony existing within a single line of written text gains even more validity.

The basic principles of musical polyphony have been described above, and they can be applied to different areas of literature, and especially also to the structure and form of prose texts. In

the context of different lines of action, one condition is that more than one plot line exists simultaneously to a certain extent. These lines of action could theoretically exist independently, but together they form a new entity with respect to the content, which they could not have on their own. This effect of 'simultaneity' can be achieved through different means, one of them being a rapid alternation between two of the plot lines where, in some cases, the information that the two, or more, events are happening at the same time, is also verbalised by adding words or phrases such as 'while', 'at the same time' or 'as'. Here it is important to note that this simultaneity is only concerned with events happening at the same time, while the place of occurrence does not have to overlap at all.

Another possibility is the usage of different themes as a means of achieving a polyphonic structure: in this case, the themes can be introduced either simultaneously or in succession. However, through their contrapuntal connection, they together once again form a unit that is in distinctive contrast to the individual themes. Here, as in musical counterpoint, it is possible that one theme, or even more than one, is more dominant than others and is therefore foregrounded in a certain way. The difference between themes and plot lines being used polyphonically is that a plot line forms a certain unity which does not have to exist in a theme, where very different scenes may exist, as long as they are interconnected by the same overarching theme.

The last possibility to be discussed here is the creation of a polyphonic overall structure, which can either be represented in the arrangement of the chapters (of a novel), or lines of action

taking place on different levels of time. If a novel is not written in a strictly chronological form but alternates between different levels of time, these levels may be arranged in a polyphonic way. In this case, a special focus has to be put on the succession of sections, because if there are cases where the narration of events which occur on different levels of time are intermingled into a situation where these events seem to overlap and appear to create a situation of simultaneity, and furthermore, if again, the events of the different levels of time create a unity where they are both independent and still influence each other and connect each other, one can speak of a polyphonic arrangement of levels of time. In many cases, the events on the different levels of time are organized by chapters, in which case one can speak of a polyphonic arrangement of chapters. However, even though this might be predominant, time levels do not always have to be divided by chapters.

Yet, although it is indeed possible to detect polyphonic structures within literature, one always has to keep in mind that it is not possible to create 'real' polyphony in literature. This is also argued by Wolf, who writes that

in all these cases the alleged simultaneity is faulted by the inevitable linearity of the reading process and is at best an imaginary one, while in music simultaneous sounds and polyphony are (usually) an acoustic reality.
(Wolf 21)

3.2.5 'Word music' and 'verbal music'

Among the terms commonly used in connection with literature and music, there are two concepts that are very likely to cause confusion, namely *word music* and *verbal music*. It can be said that Steven P. Scher established these terms which describe rather dissimilar phenomena. In his book *Verbal Music in German Literature*, Scher defines 'word music' as

a type of poetry or prose which primarily aims at imitation of the acoustic quality [...] [which] attempt[s] to evoke the auditory sensation of music by composing verbal structures consisting predominantly of onomatopoeic words or word clusters.
(Scher *Verbal Music* 3)

Werner Wolf also adds that the use of word music "gives the impression of a presence of music by foregrounding the (original) acoustic dimensions of the verbal signifiers," and that "these signifiers remain **verbal** signifiers: they do not become but only imitate music." He also states that "[i]n all these cases literary language must be 'heard' rather than merely read, and this requires [...] a special effort in fiction, which is not normally read aloud" (Wolf 58).

However, 'verbal music' denotes a different phenomenon, which is defined by Scher as

any literal presentation (whether in poetry or in prose) of existing or fictitious musical compositions: any poetic texture which has a piece of music as its 'theme.'
(Scher *Verbal Music* 8)

Wolf, however, criticises the definition of the term and suggests that "it ought to be redefined and relocated in the context of a general typology of musico-literary forms" (Wolf 59). Nevertheless, because the term is used widely in the pertinent

literature, he suggests that one adhere to it, which is the reason why it will also be used within this paper. Wolf has several points of criticism. For one part, he argues that the terms 'word music' and 'verbal music' are too similar, and therefore difficult to distinguish and likely to create confusion. Furthermore, in his opinion the definition of verbal music is too vague and he criticises that it intersects with the definitions of both 'word music' and 'structural analogies'. Wolf points out that

[t]he problem [...] is that what Scher himself calls "word music" **also** aims at suggesting "effects of music" and that verbal music consequently does not seem to differ "distinctly" from word music, as asserted in the above definition, nor do structural analogies for that matter. The general weakness of Scher's definition of 'verbal music' is that it confuses **referential** aspects [...] with **functional** and **technical** aspects [...].
(Wolf 60)

However, he also adds that "the referential aspect, Scher's original idea of 'verbal music', may well be used for that purpose, namely its defining connection with a specific musical composition" (Wolf 60). Scher also suggests that

[t]wo basic types of verbal music can be distinguished. When the poet draws on direct musical experience and/or a knowledge of the score as his source we may speak of *re-presentation* of music in words: he proceeds to *describe* either a piece of music which he himself identifies or which is identifiable through inference [...]. Poetic imagination alone, inspired by music in general, serves as the source of the second type of verbal music; and it involves direct *presentation* of fictitious music in words: the poet creates "a 'verbal piece of music,' to which no composition corresponds" (quoted in: Scher *Verbal Music* 8)
(Scher Notes 152f.)

Wolf notes that this distinction between *re-presentation* and *presentation* is an important one for the distinction between

“‘real’ vs. ‘fictitious quasi-intertextual intermediality’,” but that they

are not to be **opposed** to technical devices such as word music and formal analogies [...], but these are **referential options open to both the mere thematization of music and to its imitation**. In other words, a specific musical reference in literature is an option which occurs in all forms of covert musico-literary intermediality and hence in all technical forms of musical imitation as well as in all positional forms of musical thematization. Consequently, verbal music cannot typologically be located in the same set of forms as word music and structural analogies but must be conceived of as a part of a separate typological set, in which the criterion of reference is the dominant aspect. Inside this sub-category verbal music as a **specific** reference to music is opposed to a **general** reference which is inherent in all covert musico-literary intermediality. (Wolf 60).

To conclude, although the terms are indeed very easy to confuse, they will be used in this thesis because of their prevalence in current literature. Furthermore, notwithstanding the fact that these definitions are controversial and often disputed, the terms ‘word music’ and ‘verbal music’ will be used according to the definitions presented by Scher.

3.3 The Time of our Singing as an example of musicalized fiction?

In his work, Werner Wolf uses the term “musicalized fiction” for a very specific phenomenon within the field of musico-literary intermediality. He defines ‘musicalization of fiction’ as

a special case of covert musico-literary intermediality to be found in (parts of) novels or short stories. It consists in an (in most cases) intentional shaping of the *discours* (affection, e.g., the

linguistic material, the formal arrangement or structure of the narrative, and the imagery used) and sometimes also of the *histoire* (the content structure of the narrative), so that verifiable or at least convincingly identifiable 'iconic' similarities or analogies to (a work of) music or to effects produced by it emerge in the fictional text. As a result, the reader has the impression that music is involved in the signifying process of the narrative not only as a general signified or a specific — real or imaginary — referent but also that the presence of music can indirectly be experienced while reading.

(Wolf 52)

In a later chapter of his book he admits that this definition has "left some blind spots, especially in the formula that musicalization consists in **verifiable or at least convincingly identifiable** 'iconic' similarities" (Wolf 72) to music, which is the reason why he elaborates on the question of the identification of musicalized fiction and provides a detailed delineation of criteria and possible types of evidence for musicalized fiction. In fact, these criteria seem to be so specific and detailed that it should theoretically be possible to apply them as a test for musicalization to any text which has music as its central theme. This is also the reason why *The Time of our Singing* will be analysed according to Wolf's framework to ascertain whether one could call the novel a case of musicalized fiction or not. He summarizes all of his criteria in the diagram shown below, which will also be taken as a point of departure for the present analysis (following section cf. Wolf 71-85).

diagram IV:

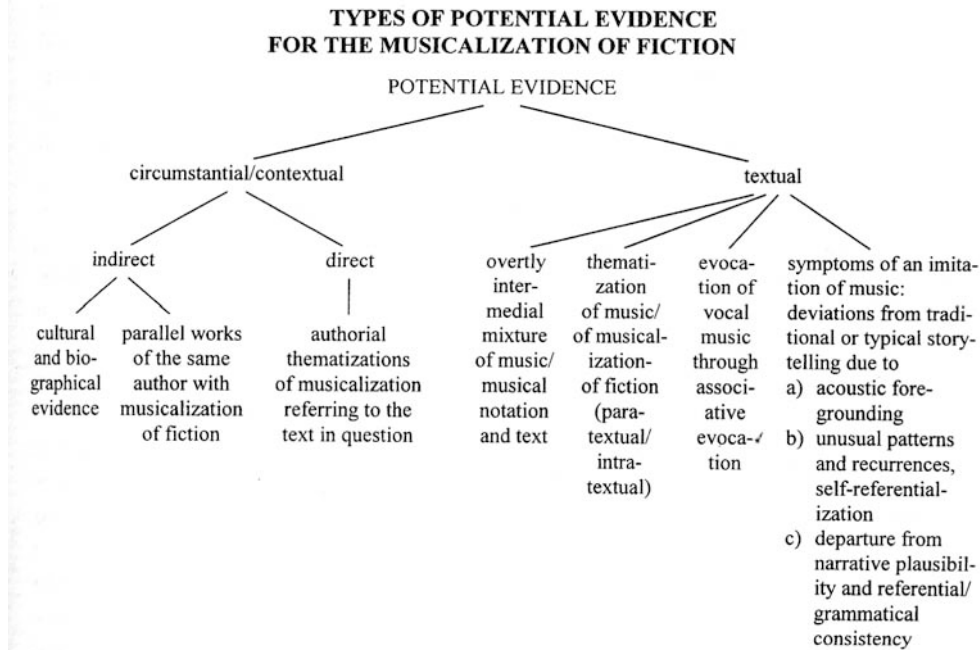


fig. 6 Wolf 83 ⁵

To begin with, Wolf distinguishes between circumstantial/contextual and textual evidence and also points out that contextual evidence “has only a very reduced indicative value,” but also that “the frequency and extent with which an author has commented on, or dealt with music cannot be entirely neglected in our context” (Wolf 73). Within the category of circumstantial evidence, he makes a further distinction between indirect and direct contextual (potential) evidence. Into the former category belong cultural or biographical evidence about the author, which corroborate that the author has an interest in music, which in the case of Richard Powers is true, because he does indeed play the cello, the guitar, the

⁵ There seems to be a mistake in the column “evocation of vocal music through associative evocation [sic]”, which should be evocation through associative *quotation*, as it is also called everywhere else in Wolf’s work (cf. 55, 67-69, 74). Therefore, it will also be referred to as “evocation through associative quotation” throughout this thesis, also when in direct reference to the figure above.

clarinet and the saxophone and he sings (cf. Dewey *Understanding* 6).

The next question is whether there are other works by the same author that contain musicalization of fiction (or at least a treatment of music). This also holds true for Powers, as there are very strong indicators that *The Gold Bug Variations* (1991) contains instances of musicalized fiction. If an author points out musicalization in their own work, Wolf speaks of direct authorial thematization of the text in question. Although it is very difficult to find this particular type of evidence, Powers says in an interview with Alec Michod in *The Believer* that

The Time of Our Singing, [...] with its concerns of race, cultural ownership, and individual identity, [is] necessarily more character- and story-driven, although underpinned by a formal, musical structure,

and therefore one can say that this criterion is also fulfilled.

The more significant type of evidence, according to Wolf, is textual evidence, which he divides into four main categories.

Firstly, there is the overtly intermedial mixture of music or musical notation and text, which does not occur in *The Time of our Singing* and can therefore be disregarded for the present analysis.

Secondly, he lists the thematization of music or of the musicalization of fiction in paratextual or intratextual positions. As pointed out before, music is a central theme throughout the novel and there are only few sections of the novel where music is not mentioned in one way or another. Therefore, the intratextual thematization of music certainly does occur, as does the paratextual thematization in form of chapter titles such

as "Songs of a Wayfarer" (427) and "Don Giovanni" (489) amongst many others. Wolf proposes that in the case of the thematization, several factors have to be taken into account. He defines five parameters which may help to decide whether a work of fiction is musicalized or not.

The first aspect is the "[s]pecificity or concreteness of thematization" (Wolf 80), which means that the more explicitly and concretely a piece of music, or a term very closely related to music, is presented, the higher the probability of an identification of musicalized fiction becomes. To exemplify this with *The Time of our Singing*, a less concrete (paratextual) thematization would be the title of the novel "The Time of our Singing", whereas a very explicit thematization would be the chapter title "Meistersinger" (525), which on the one hand refers to Richard Wagner's opera *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, on the other hand, however, it metaphorically stands for the story of the formation and the success of the vocal ensemble *Voces Antiquae*, who are, if one takes the German word "Meistersinger" literally, indeed "master singers".

The second aspect concerns the "[r]ange of reference", which is the "applicability of musical references to the totality or only parts of a text" (Wolf 81). It seems only logical that references which affect the entire text hold more significance for a possible reading of the text as musicalized fiction. Here again, the title of the novel can be taken as an example, because throughout the entire novel, singing is addressed time and again.

The third aspect is the "[f]requency and extent of musical thematizations" (Wolf 81). It would be difficult to quantify exactly how much of *The Time of our Singing* has music as a central

theme, because such a large part of the novel is concerned with music, and it would indeed be easier to count the occasions where music does not appear in the text in one way or another. In this case, one can say that the musical thematizations are very frequent and extensive, which would also support a reading of the novel as musicalized fiction.

The fourth aspect Wolf lists is the “[s]pecificity and function of reference” (Wolf 81). In most cases in *The Time of our Singing*, the pieces of music in question are clearly identified and can be seen as quasi-intertextual references, which in turn indicates a higher possibility of musicalized fiction.

The last parameter is that of reliability. He notes that one always has to consider the possibility of having an unreliable narrator, which would mean that apparent musicalizations may not be counted towards a general musicalized reading of the text, which is why he points out that “usually paratextual statements are particularly reliable, as they can generally be considered to constitute more or less direct comments by the (implied) author” (Wolf 82). Because of the many thematizations of music in chapter titles, which fall into the category of paratext, this criterion can also be seen as fulfilled. To sum up, in *The Time of our Singing*, all of Wolf's proposed aspects of a thematization of music are present, and therefore indicate the possibility of a case of musicalized fiction.

The third type of textual evidence concerns the “evocation of vocal music through associative quotation” (Wolf 74). In simplified terms, this means that “the text of a real or imaginary song (or an operatic aria) is quoted in a literary work and may

evoke music in the reader's mind through association" (Wolf 68).
He also clarifies that

a specific reference to a well-known piece of vocal music is much more apt to evoke music in the reader's mind than an unspecific suggestion that some sort of song is sung.
(Wolf 74)

This type of evocation frequently appears throughout *The Time of our Singing*, where on the first page alone, on the one hand, the first four lines of Dowland's "Time Stands Still" are reproduced, and on the other hand, it is mentioned that the song sung before Dowland was Schubert's "Erlkönig" (cf. 3). Although only one of these two songs (i.e. the "Erl-King") fulfils Wolf's criterion of being "well-known" to a general public, and even here only those persons who have a general interest in classical music would know the music of the song. However, as both songs are clearly identified, it is to be expected that the music of the songs will be evoked in the mind of a reader familiar with them. Despite Wolf specifying a contrast between "well-known" and the "unspecific suggestion that [a] song is sung", one can definitely argue that the inclusion of the text of a specific song falls into the category of "evocation through associative quotation", regardless of whether one considers the song to be well-known or not. The two examples above are only two of many, and although it might be open to debate whether every instance of a quotation of a song text in *The Time of our Singing* falls into the category of evocation through associative

quotation, one can assume that in most occurrences this is indeed the case.⁶

Up to this point it has seemed as though *The Time of our Singing* could indeed be regarded as prime example of a reading as musicalized fiction. However, the situation becomes much less clear cut when the aspect which Wolf lists last in his diagram is considered. It is what he calls “symptoms for an imitation of music: deviations from traditional or typical storytelling” (Wolf 83) owing to three different phenomena.

First, there is “acoustic foregrounding” (Wolf 83), which is “technically realized by word music” (Wolf 75). This form of imitation of music can be found in *The Time of our Singing* in at least two concrete cases, first in the scene where David, Jonah and Joseph attend a concert at the cloisters in New York. The piece is, interestingly enough, the only case where a piece of music is not clearly identified but only imitated, which can probably be ascribed to the fact that Joseph at that age did not know exactly which piece it is they heard but remembers it clearly because of his excellent musical memory. The piece is clearly a “Kyrie” from a mass, although the words are not quoted verbatim but rather imitated:

The women start by themselves [...]. Keee, the letter-box slots of their mouths release—just the syllable of glee little Ruth made before we persuaded her to learn to talk. [...] Then reee. The note splits into its own accompaniment. [...] Rises a major third, that first interval any child any color anywhere learns to sing. [...] The high voice rises a perfect fifth, lifting off from the lower note's bed [...], on aaay, into a higher brightness, then collapsing back

⁶ Quotation of song lyrics are present on following pages in *The Time of our Singing*: 3, 6, 50, 71, 145, 147, 194, 212, 215, 234, 271, 316, 380, 386, 400, 422, 447, 532, 619-620

to fuse in unison. [...] More lines splinter, copy, and set off on their own. *Aaay-laay. Aay-laay-eee!*
(160 f.)

The other case of imitation of music is much shorter and is a description as well as an imitation of Jonah singing the first word of Dowland's "Time Stands Still" at one of their concerts:

He touches his tongue to his hard palate, presses on the cylinder of air behind it until his tongue tips over his front teeth with a dwarf explosion, that fine-point puff of *tuh* that expands, pulling the vowel behind it, spreading like a slowed-film cloud, to *ta* to *tahee* to *time* to transcend the ear's entire horizon [...].
(215)

One can observe that in both passages the "words" which indicate the imitation are set in italics, and that they are not in fact real words but phonetic representations of what the listener of the piece would perceive. Although in both cases the acoustic elements are indeed foregrounded, there is not quite enough evidence over the course of the entire novel to count the aspect of foregrounding satisfactorily fulfilled, especially considering the frequency of the other phenomena which contribute to a musicalized reading.

The second phenomenon consists of "unusual patterns and recurrences" and self-referentialization. Wolf suggests that this might happen on the levels of phonology, syntax, semantics or on a thematic level and that this can be realized either through word music or through structural and imaginary analogies to music (cf. Wolf 75). Although not apparent at first glance, these so-called unusual patterns do exist on a thematic level in *The Time of our Singing* and are related to the underlying musical structure one can identify in the novel. However, a more detailed discussion of the structural analogies to music in the

novel can be found in the following chapter, and therefore here it suffices to say that the parameter of formation of patterns can be seen as at least partly fulfilled.

The third phenomenon is the “departure from narrative plausibility and referential/grammatical consistency” (Wolf 83), which, however, cannot be found in *The Time of our Singing*.

All the aforementioned types of evidence, their manifestations and the way they are represented in *The Time of our Singing* are summarised in the table below.

type of evidence	circumstantial / contextual evidence		
	cultural or biographical evidence	parallel works of the same author with musicalization of fiction	authorial thematizations of musicalization referring to the text in question
example	Richard Powers plays several instruments and sings	<i>The Gold Bug Variations</i>	<i>The Time of our Singing</i> underpinned by a formal, musical structure
	yes	yes	yes

textual evidence						
overtly intermedi- al mixture of musical notation and text	Thematization of music/musicalization of fiction		evocation of music through associative quotation	symptoms of an imitation of music: deviations from traditional storytelling		
	para- textual	intra- textual		acoustic foreground- ing	patterns, self- referential -ization	narrative implausibility/ grammatical inconsistencies
—	chapter titles	usage of musical metaphors	song lyrics integrated in the text	instances word music	underlying musical structure of the text	—
no	yes	yes	yes	(yes)	yes	no

fig. 7 Table *The Time of our Singing* as musicalized fiction

Considering the fact that most of the proposed types of evidence for musicalized fiction do exist in *The Time of our*

Singing, it would be possible to simply identify the novel as an example of the musicalization of fiction. However, Wolf himself states that even in cases where most of his parameters are applicable, it is rarely indisputable whether a text is a case of musicalized fiction, and that said musicalization is always a question of degree rather than of presence or absence (cf. Wolf 85). A point of criticism here is that this already suggests that this framework for identifying musicalized fiction is highly restrictive, especially if one relies heavily on the identification of the symptoms of imitation of music. These parameters, and especially the “departure from narrative plausibility and referential/grammatical consistency” (Wolf 83), describe phenomena which can almost exclusively be found in texts which would be considered to be experimental. This, in turn, would almost unquestionably disqualify texts which adhere to “traditional” modes of storytelling, or even grammar. Therefore, although this framework for identifying musicalized fiction is certainly of value to the general theorisation of the use and role of music in literature, it is too limiting to be applicable to a wider range of texts having music as one of their central themes.

4 Musical structures in the text

In order to examine the appearance of musical structures within a literary text it is necessary to establish the necessary musicological terminology. A term which is often found in relation to musical structures is (musical) form. In the *Oxford Dictionary of Music*, form is defined as “[t]he structure and design of a composition”. However, this definition is not universally accepted — mainly because of its simplicity — and the definition of “form” in the context of music has been at the centre of debate for centuries. The *Oxford Companion to Music* also offers a more detailed definition, which asserts that “[f]orm can be said to be the way in which the various elements in a piece of music — its pitches, rhythms, dynamics, timbres — are organized in order to make it coherent to a listener.”

As discussed earlier, there are different modes of referring to music – implicitly and explicitly. The incorporation of musical structures into a text is described by Wolf as being the “most challenging” and he defines this as

the creation of some sort of formal analogy either by adapting a narrative text to the structure of a particular musical form or composition (resulting in “structural analogies”).
(Wolf 326)

These structural analogies can be found in various ways throughout *The Time of our Singing*, and the most salient are the forms of Theme and Variation, the Rondo and, finally, the somewhat more complicated notion of Fugues and counterpoint within a narrative text.

4.1 (Theme and) Variations

The themes discussed in the analysis of *The Time of our Singing* are music, race and time, and how they are indeed recurring, and often presented in different ways – the “variations.”

The main reason to propose that one can read the novel as (partially) structured upon the form of theme and variations, is that it is highly remarkable how central these three themes are. In addition, each of these themes is approached from different angles on multiple occasions, and therefore it can be said that there is a certain degree of “variation” of each of the themes.

The variations on “music” can be roughly divided into three larger categories, namely making music, listening to music and thinking or talking about music, which also includes the description of music. Within the category of music-making numerous further distinctions can be found. On the one hand, there is the fundamental difference between singing and playing an instrument and, on the other hand, there are the various situations in which one can perform music — such as practising, concerts, recording, competitions, music lessons and playing as merely a job to earn one's sustenance. Powers manages to capture all the most important elements of the life of a musician in his portrayal of the Strom brothers, with the entire spectrum of the life of a professional musician present.

As an illustration, there will be a closer analysis and comparison of these variations on music making.

The first one is a passage from a description of one of Joseph's piano lessons at Juilliard.

I played Chopin's Mazurka in A Minor for him. Its trick is that little dotted rhythm – how to make it lilt without listing. I got through the first repeat without incident. Then I made that turn into C, the burst of relative major – the most predictable surprise brightening on earth. Mr. Bateman, eyes closed, maybe dozing, jumped forward. “Stop!”

I jerked my hands off the keys, a dog whacked with the newspaper he has been trained to fetch.

“What did you just do, there?” I was afraid to look up. When I did, Mr. Bateman was waving. “Do that again!” I did, crippled with self-consciousness. “No, no,” he said, each rejection oddly supportive. “Play it the way you did the first time.”

I played it exactly as I always played it. Each time, Mr. Bateman's face rose and fell in whole storm systems. Finally, he lit up. “That's it! That's beautiful! Who taught you that?” He waved his arms around his head, happily warding off a swarm of fact. “Don't tell me. I don't want to know. Just keep doing it, no matter what else I tell you to do!”

For days afterward, I wondered if I might not, after all, have a gift I didn't suspect. I knew what Mr. Bateman was trying to do: move me from fingers to feeling, from mechanics to mind. He called a little Schumann fantasy piece I played “brilliant,” and all that afternoon, I thought I could change worlds.

(171 f.)

On the one hand, this scene depicting a music lesson, illustrates the details a prospective musician has to pay attention to when learning a piece – “how to make [the dotted rhythm] lilt without listing,” a difference that would barely be noticeable to the average listener but which might just make the difference between an average and a great musician. On the other hand, it shows how important the interaction, and especially the praise, of a teacher can be for a pupil.

The next example is from a scene, shortly afterwards, where Joseph is practising Grieg's *Lyric Pieces*.

I worked through the *Lyric Pieces*, one every two weeks, a dozen bars every afternoon. I'd repeat the phrase until the notes

dissolved under me, the way a word turns back into meaningless purity when chanted long enough. I'd split twelve bars into six, then shatter it down to one. One bar, halting, rethreading, retaking, now soft, now mezzo, now note for staggered note. I'd experiment with the attacks, making my hand a rod and striking each machine-coupled note. I'd relax and roll a chord as if it were written out arpeggio. I'd repeat the drill, depressing the keys so slowly, they didn't sound, playing the whole passage with only releases. I'd lean on the bass or feel my hands, like an apprentice conjurer extracting hidden interior harmonies from the fray.

The game was leverage, control. Speed and span, how to crack open the intervals, widen them from on high, raise the body's focus from finger into arm, lengthen the arm like a hawk on the wing. I'd coat the line in rubato or tie every note into a legato flow. I'd round the phrase or clip it, then pedal the envelope and let it ring. I'd turn the baby grand into a two-manual harpsichord. Play, stop, lift, rewind, repeat, stop, lift, back a line, back a phrase, back two bars, half a bar, the turn, the transition, the note, the thinnest edge of attack. My brain sank into states of perfect tedium laced with intense thrill. I was a plant extracting petals from sunlight, water wearing away a continent's coast.
(184)

Such an extremely detailed account of how a pianist might practice a piece is seldom found in literature, and yet it describes perfectly how a musician often has to deconstruct and unravel a piece of music until they understand it entirely and until every detail is committed to muscle memory. Yet, the scene also conveys the seriousness of practising and allows little room for playfulness, so unlike the games of "Crazed Quotations", which were played so regularly in the Strom household.

During such a game of Crazed Quotations, on a cold December night in 1950, David and Delia Strom got their first look at just what they'd brought into this world. The soprano started with a fat, slow pitch: Haydn's German Dance no. 1 in D. On top of that, the bass cobbled up a precarious Verdi "La donna è mobile."

The effect was so joyfully deranged that the two, on nothing more than a shared grin, let the monstrosity air for another go-round. But during the reprise, something rose up out of the tangle, a phrase that neither parent owned. The first pitch shone so clear and centred, it took a moment for the adults to hear it wasn't some phantom sympathetic resonance. They looked at each other in alarm, then down at the oldest child, Jonah, who launched into a pitch-perfect rendition of Josquin's *Absalon, fili mi*.

The Stroms had sight-read the piece months before and put it away as too hard for the children. That the boy remembered it was already a wonder. When Jonah engineered the melody to fit the two already in motion, David Strom felt as he had on first hearing that boy's choir soar above the double chorus opening Bach's *Saint Matthew Passion*. Both parents stopped in midphrase, staring at the boy.

(14)

This passage not only describes the aforementioned game, but it also illustrates Jonah's remarkable musical talent. Furthermore, one can already see that for Powers it is very important to specify the pieces, which also gives a musically well-versed reader the opportunity of "hearing" in their minds the pieces mentioned, which again would fall into what Wolf calls evocation through associative quotation.

Listening to music also plays an important part within the novel, and its most important function is in the formation and education of musicians, particularly also Jonah's and Joseph's training. This ranges from collective listening to recordings of singers like Caruso at Boylston Academy, to Joseph listening to records of contemporary popular music to learn new pieces for his job at the Glimmer Room in Atlantic City.

The third variation, as mentioned above, is the description of music. However, here it has to be noted that this element

occurs on a different level from the performance and the practice of music, because in contrast to these two, the description of a piece of music is not a common element of the plot but rather sets a certain tone. Although the author makes a conscious choice to incorporate accounts of performing music and the effects of listening to music, he makes a different, albeit similar, decision to include descriptions of music. Many of the descriptions of music are presented from Joseph's perspective, primarily because he is the main narrator. One of the most remarkable ones in this context is a scene where the Strom boys go and listen to a concert in the cloisters with their father.

For variations on "race" the central issues are, firstly, the Strom family, with the story of Delia and David and the life of their children. Secondly, there is the Civil Rights Movement of the United States, which forms a sort of historical red thread throughout the novel, and lastly, although not as pronounced as the other two themes is the difference between race in America and race in Europe.

The race variations concerning the Strom family are, on the one side, Delia and David, and the difficulties they face being an interracial couple in the 1940s — the problems which ultimately lead to Delia's death — and their decision to raise their children "beyond race." Then there are the children and their search for their identity. Their problem is that they are generally considered to be too light to be black yet not nearly light enough to be white, and therefore cannot find a way to belong. It is mainly Delia's insistence on keeping the children away from racial prejudice and discrimination which leads to Jonah and Joseph growing up with a certain naïveté towards issues of race.

Although Ruth is also raised the same way, their mother's death changes her profoundly, and in addition to that, going to a "normal" school and not being completely immersed in classical music lay the foundations for Ruth becoming a vociferous Civil Rights activist and for joining the Black Panthers.

A, maybe somewhat ironical, twist is Jonah ultimately dying from an accident during a race riot in Los Angeles, even though he had never been an activist. However, there are several instances in the novel where he is mesmerized by the riots and wants to become part of them.

The aforementioned difference between race in the United States and race in Europe is illustrated when Jonah moves to Germany, and suddenly realises that in Europe having darker skin is not nearly as complicated an issue as in the United States, which can be explained by the historical background of the two continents. In a postcard from Magdeburg, Jonah writes

"They love me here, Joey." He might have been Robeson, on his first visit to the Soviet Union. Everything there made a mockery of everything here. "The East Germans look at me and see a singer. I never understood that stare Americans always gave me, until I got away from it. Nice to know what it feels like, for a while, to be something other than hue-man."

(427)

The variations on time occur on two different levels. On the one hand, they can be found explicitly discussed in the passages where David is researching the nature of time and also talking about it. On the other hand, it can be found in the structure of the novel and the arrangement of chapters and in some cases also the individual paragraphs of the text. As mentioned above,

David subscribes to a circular notion of time, which is also reflected in the structure of the novel.

The circularity of the novel's structure is especially reflected in the scenes that take place on the Mall in Washington, D.C. In these it is also rather noteworthy that they not only portray a circularity in time, but that they also show a certain relationship between space and time. There are three scenes in the novel where key events in the history of the Civil Rights Movement in the United States — more specifically, massed gatherings in Washington, D.C. — are described. These are Marian Anderson's concert in 1939, the "March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom", or "Great March on Washington", as it is also known, of 1963, where Martin Luther King delivered his famous "I have a dream" speech, and lastly the "Million Man March" of 1995 under the leadership of Louis Farrakhan. Here, the Marian Anderson concert and the Million Man March have to be especially emphasized, because they form a paradoxical situation, which becomes only more complicated the more one thinks about it. At the Million Men March, Ruth's son Robert becomes the reason why Delia and David start a conversation and spend some time together, although, technically, they actually met at the Marian Anderson concert. Therefore, they are at the same place, yet not at the same time but more than 55 years apart, and nevertheless they meet. If he had not been there, they would never have got better acquainted with each other, and without that scene, neither Ruth, nor consequently Robert, would ever have been born. This is the only element that drastically deviates from the realism of the rest of the novel, because logically it is utterly impossible that Robert really is the

one who introduces his own grandparents to each other. However, the function of this somewhat paradoxical scene is that it gives the novel a sense of closure and of having come full circle.

4.2 Rondo

The idea of reading *The Time of our Singing* as a rondo might seem an attractive option at first glance. To recreate the musical structure of a rondo in a literary text, the form “ABAC...A” would have to be applied to the text in a way that one scene or event is replicated several times throughout the text, in the ideal case this event would be exactly the same in each reoccurrence.

In *The Time of our Singing*, two scenes are repeated, namely the “America’s Next Voice” competition, and the Marian Anderson concert, but they occur only twice each.

Therefore, it has to be conceded that the repetition of just two scenes in a novel as long as *The Time of our Singing* does not constitute sufficient evidence to propose a valid reading of the rondo as an underlying structure for *The Time of our Singing*.

4.3 Polyphony, Counterpoint and Fugue

In *The Time of our Singing*, the creation of effects of counterpoint and polyphony is attempted in a number of passages. These polyphonic effects can be located on two distinct levels; on the one hand, there are the two levels of time on which the story is told, and on the other hand there is the interplay of the themes of race and music, and also of time. Concerning the theme of time, again two functions can be observed —the concept of time used literally, and the figurative presence of time as an element of the story.

The contrapuntal use of the two levels of time is examined in Meike Reher's *Darstellung von Musik im zeitgenössischen englischen und amerikanischen Bildungsroman*, where she argues that the way the chapters are arranged in *The Time of our Singing* can be seen as an example of Powers' attempt to model his novel contrapuntal structure (Reher 282ff.). The two aforementioned levels are, on the one hand, the story of Jonah and Joseph Strom, and on the other hand, the (hi)story of the Daley family and the early relationship between Delia and David. As will become apparent in the table below, the alternation of the two levels occurs with ever-increasing frequency. This contributes to a certain quickening of the pace of the novel, and can be compared to a device often used in the composition of fugues called *stretto*. This is explained the following way in the *Oxford Dictionary of Music*,

Sometimes in later entries there is overlapping of the Subject, each v[oice], as it gives out, not waiting for the previous v[oice] to finish but breaking in, as it were, prematurely. This device [...]

tends to increase the emotional tension of the entry in which it occurs.

This effect is also used in *The Time of our Singing*, and the following table shows the meticulous composition of the novel's structure, as well as the underlying musical structure.

However, the arrangement of Reher's table is partially misleading, which is the reason why the table below differs in the following aspects. Firstly, in the column at the far left, the summary of the distribution of chapters and subjects has been changed to increase clarity and avoid confusion. Furthermore, Reher inserted the chapters in Subject 2 in the same line as the respective last chapter of Subject 1. This can be seen as misleading, as it would appear that there is a correlation between each last chapter of Subject 1 and the chapter mentioned in Subject 2, therefore the chapters in Subject 2 in this column are moved one line down and thus appear in the same order as in the novel.

Formal distribution of chapters in <i>The Time of our Singing</i>		
	Subject 1: Jonah and Joseph Strom	Subject 2: Daley Family
4 x 3	1. December 1961 2. Winter 1950 3. My Brother's Face	4. Easter 1939
	5. My Brother as the Student Prince 6. My Brother as Hänsel 7. In Trutina	8. Late 1843 — Early 1935
	9. A Tempo 10. August 1955 11. My Brother as Aeneas	12. April — May 1939
	13. Bist du bei mir 14. Spring 1949 15. My Brother as Orpheus	16. Not exactly one of us
2 x 2	17. My Brother as Othello 18. August 1963	19. Spring 1940 — Winter 1941
	20. December 1964 21. My Brother as Faust	22. Summer 1941 — Fall 1944
4 x 1	23. My Brother as Loge	24. August 1945
	25. Songs of a Wayfarer	26. Autumn 1945
	27. Don Giovanni	28. November 1945 — August 1953
	29. Meistersinger	
	30. The Visitation 31. Deep River 32. Requiem 33. Thee	

fig. 8 Reher cf. 282

As mentioned above, polyphony is not only found in the novel's external structure, i.e. the arrangement of the chapters, but also in the interplay of the subjects of music, race and time. Whereas again music and race seem to be the more prominent themes, the importance of time must not be underestimated. As a special form of polyphony, which is rarer in prose than in poetry, one can also consider words or sentences which have more than one meaning, and in some cases evoke a certain image, sentiment, or – in this case also – music.

To illustrate these forms of polyphony, some passages from *The Time of our Singing* will be analysed in detail. The scene chosen for this purpose is the one of the Strom brothers' first recording, which they tape in Los Angeles to the backdrop of the Watts Riots of August 1965. The riots constitute the subject of *race*, while the recording represents the subject *music*. *Time* enters in various moments.

I can hear the record, still. My mother's voice is there inside him, but my father's is, too. There is no starting point. We trace back forever, accident on accident, through every country taken from us. But we end everywhere, always. Stand still and gaze: This is the message in that sound, rushing back from the finish line it has reached.
(317)

This passage contains three important elements. First, there is *time* moving backwards and without a starting point — which represents the inquiry into the beginning of time, which is one of the key elements in the research of time. Race can be found in the phrase “through every country taken from us.” This again can stand for their being black and therefore considered to be second class citizens on the one side, and for their Jewish heritage and the history of oppression and persecution, especially considering David's history, on the other side. The phrase “stand still and gaze” clearly is an allusion to the song

Time stands still, as the first line is “Time stands still with gazing on her face.” This again is an example of the polyphony on two levels. Firstly, this is a case of evocation through associative quotation, because a reader familiar with the song would be able to imagine the melody (voluntarily or involuntarily). Secondly, there is the sense that the message in their music is that they stand still and gaze — while, as will become apparent in the next passage — around them the city is going up in flames. Furthermore, there is also a certain element of contradiction present in this construction: *time* is both standing still and rushing at the same time, which is, of course, impossible, but ties in nicely with the representation of time within the novel as an unsteady, paradoxical and incomprehensible notion.

The following, longer, passage contains a number of occurrences of verbal polyphony.

We finished recording on a Wednesday night, two days later. The producer wanted Dowland to be the record's last track. I picked the studio's backup piano, a rare combination of covered sound and stiff action that helped me fake the frets of a lute. Today, you'd never get away with piano anymore. A third of a century ago, authenticity was still anything you made it. *Time stands still*. But never the same way for long.

Jonah's first take felt flawless. But the engineer working the board was so entranced with his first-time of timelessness that he failed to see his meters clipping. Take two was leaden, Jonah's revenge for the first's destruction. The next five takes went belly-up. We'd reached the end of a difficult week. He asked for ten minutes. I stood up to take a walk down the hallway outside the recording booth, to give my brother a moment alone.

“Joey,” he called. “Don't leave me.” Like I was abandoning him to oblivion. He wanted me to sit but not say anything. He'd fallen into a panic at sending a message out beyond his own death.

We sat in silence for five minutes, and five stretched to ten: that last year that we lived in that would leave us still for so long. The engineers returned, chattering about the recent *Gemini* flight. I sat down, Jonah opened his mouth, and out came the sound that predicted everything that would still happen to him.

“Time stands still with gazing on her face.” As my brother sang, a few minutes' drive from the studio, a white motorcycle

policeman stopped a black driver — a man our sister's age — and made him take a sobriety test. Avalon and 116th: a neighbourhood of single-story houses and two-story apartment blocks. The night was hot, and the residents sat outdoors. While Jonah put stillness's finish on that opening *mi, re, do*, a crowd gathered around the arrest. Fifty milling spectators swelled to three hundred as the policeman's backup appeared on the scene.

The young man's mother arrived and started scolding her son. The crowd, the police, the man, his mother, his brother all closed on one another. More police, more pull, the crowd restive with history, and the night turning warm. There was a scuffle, the simplest kind of beginning. A club that lands in the face of everyone looking on.

The crowd grew to a thousand, and the police radioed for more help. This was around 7:30, as we were listening to the tape:

"Stand still and gaze for minutes, hours, and years to her give place." The producer was crying and cursing Jonah for laughing at him.

Over on Avalon, all music stopped. Someone spit on the officers as they hauled the man, his mother, and his brother off to jail.

Two patrolmen waded into the crowd, guns in the air, to arrest this next wave of offenders. By 7:40, as Jonah and I stood on the hot sidewalk in front of the studio, the police were pulling away under a hail of stones.

(319-320)

To begin with, there is the subject of music. This subject is present throughout the passage until the last paragraph of the quotation, where it says that "all music stopped." The first instance is the description of the piano Joseph uses to accompany Jonah. It is also one of the numerous instances of the novel where authenticity in performance of music — and especially of early music — is mentioned. Although this will be discussed in more detail in a later section of this thesis, some remarks on this specific instance will be made here.

Jonah says that "[t]oday, you'd never get away with piano anymore. A third of a century ago, authenticity was still anything you made it." This shows an interesting aspect of the development of performance practice. On one side, at the time of the recording a relative lack of knowledge about the

way certain music was played at the time of its composition — be it the instrumentation, size of an orchestra or choir, or the way of interpretation — still prevailed, and it gave the musician a kind of freedom that would not exist a decade or two later. Joseph's observation about the fact that today a professional recording or performance of Dowland accompanied by piano would be perceived as rather antiquated at best, can certainly be seen as correct. On the other side, in a "historically informed" performance there is the aim to present the music as it was intended by the composer — as far as possible.

Furthermore, through Joseph's remark that the recording was made "a third of a century" earlier, as narrator he reveals that the time of narration must be somewhere in the late 1990s, and it also reveals the amount of narrative distance.

There is a rather large number of references to Dowland's "*Time Stands Still*", as direct quotes, allusions or comments on the song. The first one is the title of the song in italics in the quote's first paragraph, which is followed by a comment on the fact that nothing stays "the same way for long." This draws attention to the instability of life, and therefore also to his brother's position in at that time highly unstable surroundings. The contrast of the use of italics in that place to the use of inverted commas later probably shows that there the title and the subsequent remark are used to comment on the situation of that last moment of stillness before the riots. However, it can also be read as a reflection on the changes in musical performance as well as on the continuous progression of time.

In the next paragraph it says that the "engineer [...] was so entranced with his first-time of timelessness", which is an allusion

to the song's prevailing theme as well as to Jonah's astounding performance. He is so mesmerised by the music that, for a moment, for him time ceases to exist.

The next mention of the song is more opaque, namely in the sentence "We sat in silence for five minutes, and five stretched to ten: that last year that we lived in that would leave us still for so long." On the one hand, there is a clear reference to the duration of time — five minutes that become ten, and on the other hand, there is the stillness that they are still able to enjoy. It is an instance of foreshadowing and already hints at their more turbulent future.

The entrance of the next subject, namely *race*, happens in the subsequent paragraph. There the first line of the song is quoted, in inverted commas, to indicate that there Jonah is singing. The construction "[a]s my brother sang [...] a white motorcycle policeman stopped a black driver" puts the action of the recording on the same temporal level as the events that mark the beginning of the riots. This continuous interpolation of the events in the studio with the events on the streets evoke the image of synchronicity, and can therefore be seen as evidence of a polyphonic treatment of the subjects.

The next reference to Dowland follows only a few sentences later with Jonah putting "stillness's finish on that opening *mi, re, do*". This "stillness's finish" can be seen as an allusion to Jonah singing the beginning of the song very quietly and subtly. With that "opening *mi, re, do*," the song has a striking and very unusual start, which merits closer examination..

First there is an observation to be made on the key signature of the piece, and a possible divergence from the original song.

The use of the solmization syllables *mi*, *re* and *do* can be interpreted in two ways. First, there is the possibility that Jonah is singing a transposed version of the song, because the original is in G major (albeit without the modern key signature of one sharp) and *mi*, *re* and *do* correspond to the notes E, D and C. However, as the song begins on the third scale degree and the third note is the tonic, which in this case would be E and C respectively, and therefore the version of the song would be in C major. The second possibility is that the solmization syllables are used to specify the scale degrees, in which case *mi* corresponds to the third scale degree, *re* to the second, and *do* to the first scale degree. In this case it would not be possible to determine the exact key in which they are recording the song, because the scale degrees and therefore also the solmization syllables are transferable to any key signature. However, for a tenor with voice qualities as Jonah's voice is described in the novel, it is more likely that a transposition is being used, as the original notation would be very low for a tenor, and a transposition from G to C major would put the song into a very comfortable range. For the following analysis, it will be assumed that a transposed version is used.⁷

The song opens with three plain notes, each accompanied by a single chord from the lute without any embellishments. They move downwards to the tonic in three whole steps in the voice. However, the accompaniment has a chord progression of tonic (1st scale degree), C major in this case, to the dominant G major (5th scale degree) and from there it moves into an interrupted cadence with the submediant A minor (6th scale degree), which

⁷ The sheet music of the song in the Appendix, however, is a transposition to F major, as no printed version in C major is available.

is also the relative minor key to C major, instead of moving back to the anticipated tonic. The German expression for the interrupted cadence, the “Trugschluss,” explains the effect of such a cadence rather well, because the listener is deceived and does not hear the expected chord but (in a major key) a sudden move to the relative minor key. This provides for a feeling of instability and suspension, and as a listener used to western art music, one knows that this is not a “true” ending, but that it goes on. It is interesting that this song opens with a figure that more traditionally would come in the middle, or towards the end of a piece and not in the first three notes, however this also contributes to a sense of suspended animation that the idea of time standing still offers. Furthermore, there is a certain discrepancy between the text “Time stands still” and the interrupted cadence on the word still — because logically one would expect a chord with more sense of closure on this word, rather than the instability of an interrupted cadence.

The succeeding reference to the song can be found in the subsequent paragraph, where a scuffle is described as “the simplest kind of beginning”. This can simultaneously be read in the sense that a simple scuffle can indeed lead to a all-out riot, and as an allusion to the beginning of the song, which at first glance is indeed very straightforward.

The next reference again is a quote from the song in the line “[t]his was around 7:30, as we were listening to the tape: ‘Stand still and gaze for minutes, hours, and years to her give place.’” Here the subject *music* is in a contrapuntal relationship with the subject *time*, race having moved to the background for a moment. The specific time indication helps to substantiate the

idea of simultaneity — even if the events cannot take place synchronously on the page, by knowing that at half past seven the Strom brothers are listening to a recording while at the exact same time the violence of the oncoming riots is beginning to erupt, the reader actively imagines them happening at the same time. Furthermore, not only is there an exact time given, but in the words of the song “minutes”, “hours” and “years” are mentioned, which are all units to measure time.

Although this is the last reference to Dowland's song, there are more instances of the creation of polyphony, and there are more observations on the subjects of *time* and *race* as well as *music* to be made.

Concerning the subject of *time*, there are fewer obvious references than for the other two subjects, however, it is present in different ways throughout the passage. On the one hand, there are the cases of foreshadowing, some of which have already been mentioned. The way Joseph as narrator describes Jonah's sound as “the sound that predicted everything that would still happen to him”, which is at once foreshadowing and referring to the future by using the term “predict”.

Furthermore, when it is mentioned that the engineers are talking about the *Gemini* flight, this fulfils two different purposes. On the one hand, it grounds the story in the 1960s, and more precisely in 1965, when the first manned flights of the Gemini Project took place (cf. NASA Project Gemini homepage). On the other hand, the relation between space and time alludes to David Strom and his research.

The subject *music* ends at the beginning of the last paragraph of the quotation with the sentence “over on Avalon all music

stopped". Not only does this hint at the serious nature of the situation on the streets, but it also coincides with the moment where Jonah and Joseph take a break, and spend ten minutes on the sidewalk. These ten minutes are also referred to in the paragraph, again with a specific time indication. This time it is 7:40, exactly ten minutes after the previous time indication.

By using the expression "[b]y 7:40", the author indicates that the seemingly short time span of ten minutes can be enough to begin an entire riot. Furthermore, it is also indicated that after these ten minutes, the first events of the riot have come to a close — the police are taking away the man, however, the hail of stones points towards the fact that the riots have only just begun.

As for the subject *race*, most of the incidents have been mentioned before in connection with the other subjects, however, the entrance of the subject is rather interesting. It is only about halfway through the passage, and is therefore the last subject to enter, and is introduced with the sentence "[a]s my brother sang, a few minutes' drive from the studio, a white motorcycle policeman stopped a black driver — a man our sister's age — and made him take a sobriety test". By emphasizing the blackness of the driver and the whiteness of the policeman, the racial problems that would erupt in a riot a moment later are foregrounded and brought to the reader's attention. In the subsequent paragraphs, *race* is present throughout, because of the action.

To bring this passage of close reading to a close, it can be said that this extract from *The Time of our Singing* can indeed be seen as an example of the attempt to place the musical

structure and technique of polyphony and counterpoint within a literary work. This is done in several ways. On the one hand, there is the idea of having two strands of events occurring at the same time and trying to make them seem as simultaneous as possible — for instance by using specific time indications — and on the other hand, there is the form of verbal polyphony, where the simultaneity is created by using expressions that evoke a certain image or reaction from the reader. Although this passage is not the only instance of this attempt within the novel, it is the one that lent itself best to a close reading such as this.

5 Music and its influences

5.1 *Music(ians) and the influence on the construction of reality*

5.1.1 Works, composers and performance

In *The Time of our Singing*, a very wide range of musical works by different composers from various periods as well as countries is presented. As the main characters are a singer and a pianist, vocal and piano music are more present than other genres. In this section, several aspects of the choice of works and their composers as well as the features of performance in all the forms which appear in the novel will be discussed.

To begin with, one of the most notable facts about the use of music in *The Time of our Singing* is that it is centred very heavily on Western art music. Reher writes that

In *The Time of our Singing* stellt die klassische Musik die zentrale Metapher der Erzählung dar, die durch die ästhetische Diskrepanz zwischen klassischer Musik und der Realität auch die sozialen Umstände reflektiert.
(Reher 275)

Jonah and Joseph's close connection with classical music through their upbringing also reflects their parents' wish, ultimately unsuccessful, to raise them "beyond race". However, even though they encounter problems which may be traced back to their (arguably) escapist upbringing, it is their love of classical music which forms (or shapes) their identities. To speak only of "classical" music, however, would be misleading, because from medieval to avantgarde music a large number of

periods are present and each of them has its own functions. The discussion of the individual forms of music will be approached chronologically, even if in *The Time of our Singing* they are used all but sequentially.

Medieval and renaissance music has three points of impact. To begin with, there is Delia and David's *Crazed Quotations* game and the music-making in the Strom household:

In the Strom's singing school, upstart tunes took their place in a thousand-year parade of harmony and invention. Cut-time, finger-snapping euphoria gave those nights of Palestrina all the more drive. For Palestrina, too, once overthrew the unsuspecting world.
(12)

Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina (ca. 1525–1594) was an Italian composer who became famous for his sacred music and his use of polyphony made him a model for many composers, who sometimes wrote “in the style of Palestrina.” As a result, he has become one of the composers of the past most studied in the 20th century (cf. Grove Music Online “Palestrina, Giovanni Perluigi da.”). Later in the novel *Voces Antiquae* also record some of Palestrina's Masses, a record which made them famous in the scene (cf. 538). However, this is only one of many examples of the mention of renaissance composers in connection with *Crazed Quotations*, but it is not necessary to list them all here.

The second composer who needs to be mentioned is John Dowland. He makes his first appearance on the first page of the novel, and is mentioned time and again throughout the story. In particular his song “Time Stands Still” is one of the most important

pieces represented in the novel, and has been discussed above (see page 70ff.).

The third, and probably most notable instance of the use of medieval and renaissance music occurs when Jonah moves to Europe and forms the ensemble *Voces Antiquae*. He later persuades Joseph to join them, and describes his project the following way:

I'm forming an a capella group. I have two high voices that'll make you want to take your own life. Gothic and Renaissance polyphony. Nothing later than 1610.
(514)

This kind of music is what Jonah in the end continues to sing for the rest of his life, and in the story they are right at the beginning of the Early Music revival movement together with well-known names such as Harnoncourt or Herreweghe (cf. 538).

Of the Baroque composers, the two most prominent are Johann Sebastian Bach and Henry Purcell. Whereas several of Bach's pieces are represented in *The Time of our Singing*, Purcell is not mentioned by name, but his opera *Dido and Aeneas* is present in the chapter title "My Brother as Aeneas" (109), as well as in other references where again *Dido and Aeneas* is referred to in passing (cf. 229, 266). Bach, however, would be difficult to turn a deaf ear to when writing a novel about a classical musician, as he does have a special status within the canon of European art music. In the novel, Jonah performs pieces by Bach on several occasions, for instance when he is still a soprano, in his first year at Boylston, he and an elderly alto, who is deeply impressed by his clear voice, perform the Aria "Wir eilen mit schwachen, doch emsigen Schritten" from Bach's cantata No. 78 (26).

When considering the classical period, which is generally considered to be the period between 1750 and 1830, works by Mozart and Schubert stand out. Mozart is, the same way as Purcell, made manifest in a chapter title, "Don Giovanni" (489), which is probably related to Joseph's difficult, and in the end, unsuccessful, relationship with Teresa Wierzbicki. The second of the classical composers, who is of greater importance to the novel, is Franz Schubert, and his setting of Goethe's ballad "Der Erlkönig" ("The Erl-King") is the piece which is mentioned most throughout the novel.

"Der Erlkönig" can be seen as a piece of central importance for Jonah. It is referred to on various occasions in the novel, including the very first chapter in the third paragraph, where the narrator suggests that the "Erl-King" is literally sitting on his brothers shoulder (cf. 3). One interpretation of the song is that the father and the child perceive the world in two different ways. While the child is terribly frightened and sees and hears the Erl-King in every shadow, the father sees only fog and willows, or hears the leaves rustling in the trees. The child seems to be delirious and hallucinating because of an unnamed and finally terminal sickness, while the father tries to comfort the child throughout their journey. However, as it is unclear whether the child is in fact killed by the Erl-King or whether it succumbs to its illness, one interpretation would be that the father denies the presence of a supernatural being who is about to take away his child. One can draw different parallels between *The Time of our Singing* and "The Erl-King". On the one hand, there are Delia and David who see the world as a place where children could choose their race and they try to ignore all the problems their

children would have to face, eventually. In this case, the parents are the ones that ignore their children's pleas and only realise that they are gone when it is too late — this would then be a metaphor for David and Ruth's deteriorating relationship. On the other hand, one could argue that, especially after Delia's death, David is the one who is hallucinating and cannot see the world for what it really is, and therefore the roles would be reversed, with him as the child and Joseph as the father. Furthermore, one could say that Delia continues to beckon to David from the grave, taking on the part of the Erl-King, and can also be seen in his conversations with his long-dead wife (cf. 360f.). In addition to these reasons, one rather pragmatic explanation for the importance of this piece is that it is a very popular showpiece for male singers, in particular, because one can demonstrate technical as well as musical and dramatic capabilities in just one piece.

During his time at Juilliard, Jonah develops a passion for avant-garde and twelve-tone music and composers such as Arnold Schoenberg, Anton Webern, Luigi Dallapiccola and others. Because twelve-tone music belongs to the genre of serial music, the group of singers around Jonah who dedicate themselves to the performance of these works, call themselves the "Serial Killers" (182). In this context, they arrange a read-through performance of Schoenberg's *Moses und Aron*, which David Strom attends and then comments on the Jewish background and content of the piece by saying that "[he] raised his children to be good God-fearing atheists, and this is the thanks?" (182). However, he does enjoy the performance and is amazed at his

son's ability to sing such difficult music and yet make it seem completely effortless.

A completely different aspect of performance is related to Jonah's turn to medieval and renaissance music later in his life. The early twentieth century saw the revival of Early Music, a movement which is still developing nowadays. Together with this revival also a quest for "authenticity" has developed, which at its heart has the wish to re-create the piece as it sounded and was played at the time of its composition (cf. Kelly 69). An exact recreation of this is, in fact, not only practically impossible to achieve but also impossible to verify as "[t]here are no period audiences" (Kelly 89). This search for authenticity is also depicted in *The Time of our Singing*, in which at the beginning Jonah still sings Dowland with piano accompaniment and Joseph comments on this by saying that "[t]oday you'd never get away with piano anymore. A third of a century ago, authenticity was still anything you made it" (319). Whether he considers this to be good or bad does not become apparent. However, it is Jonah who during his time in Belgium embarks on his own quest for authenticity together with his ensemble. One of the central questions for singers performing early music is the matter of the use of vibrato, and Kelly raises a valid point by saying that on the instruments used in medieval music it is very difficult or even impossible to produce a vibrato, and therefore asks why the case should be different for voices (cf. Kelly 86). The most common practice in the performance of Early Music nowadays is to use vibrato only as an ornament and not a condition. In *The Time of our Singing*, Jonah decides to

completely eliminate the vibrato of his voice and make his sound as pure as possible (cf. 529-532).

One of the reasons why so many musical works and composers appear in *The Time of our Singing* is that in many cases the pieces contribute to the characters' development or description. For instance, Jonah's fascination with serial music in his early adulthood can be seen as a metaphor for him trying to grow up and detach himself from the music he had been taught at home, and at the same time establishing his own identity. Another example would be Ruth's refusal to sing European Art Music ever again after her mother's memorial service, with the exception of Jonah's memorial many years later. For her, performing, or indeed, liking, this particular form of music is incompatible with being a black woman.

5.1.2 Musicians

In a novel centred on the lives of two musicians, it does not come as a surprise that a large number of characters appearing within the stories are musicians as well. The following section deals with the different musicians who can be found in *The Time of our Singing*, or more precisely, their different professions, their backgrounds, and finally, how and why they are significant for the novel as a whole. The predominant style of music in *The Time of our Singing* is Western art music, which is also why the musicians appearing in the novel focus their musical activities on this type of music. Fictional and non-

fictional musicians serve different purposes, which is also the first element under inspection in this section.

The non-fictional characters in the novel function in two ways. On the one hand, the names of a wide range of performers and ensembles are mentioned in passing, in order to place the story of Jonah and Joseph in a setting that reflects the actual conditions of the lives of musicians in the twentieth century, especially in the United States. One example of this is that Jonah sings at a memorial concert for the late Serge Koussevitzky, a conductor and composer, and at this concert Igor Stravinsky is sitting in the audience (cf. 70ff.). Another example is the way Jonah's vocal group "Voces Antiquae" is embedded into the context of a time of Early Music revival in the following quotation "[a] thousand years of neglected music came of age everywhere at once in a dozen countries. Not just our group: Kampen, Deller, Harnoncourt, Herreweghe, Hillier: an avalanche intent on remaking the past" (538). By locating Jonah and Joseph's story within what is for all intents and purposes, a historical setting, a sense of authenticity and factuality is created.

In addition to this, two non-fictional musicians play pivotal roles in course of the story, namely Albert Einstein and Marian Anderson. To understand the importance of these two characters for the novel, it is necessary to explore their backgrounds in some detail.

It is a rather well-known fact that Albert Einstein was not only one of the most important physicists of the twentieth century, but that he was also a passionate violin player — although there

seems to be some debate on his skill as a violinist⁸. Einstein plays a small, but certainly critical, part in *The Time of our Singing*, where he is described as “a white-maned old New Jersey violinist in a moth-eaten sweater, who spoke German with David and frightened Ruth with incomprehensible jokes” (15). He acts as the catalyst who sets Jonah's musical education in motion, and although Delia and David are hesitant at first, “they didn't dare to oppose a man who'd rooted out the bizarre secret of time, buried since time's beginning. Einstein was Einstein, however Gypsy-like his violin playing” (15).

On closer examination, there seem to be a number of similarities between Albert Einstein and David Strom. They are both Jews who fled from the Nazi regime, they are both professors of physics at American universities, neither of them is an orthodox or practising Jew, and finally, they both regard music as an essential element of their lives. The relationship between music and mathematics is a very old one, and, as Gilman points out, “music reflects the inner mathematical nature of music itself,” and that “[e]ven Newton saw music as one of the spaces in which numbers provide insight into the aesthetic” (Gilman 220). This relationship between music and mathematics, and indeed also physics, is therefore also reflected in Einstein and, assuming that David's character is at least partly modelled after the figure of Einstein, consequently also in David Strom.

The second non-fictional musician, Marian Anderson, features even more extensively in the novel and plays a similarly

⁸ Gilman writes that “[i]n the late 1920s the violinist Walter Friedrich noted, ‘Einstein's bowing was that of a lumberjack.’” (Gilman 228; Friedrich Herneck 1978, p. 129 (*Einstein Privat: Herta W. erinnert sich an die Jahre 1927 bis 1933*, Berlin 1978)).

important, if only peripheral, part in the development of the story. To better understand her significance to the novel, some aspects of her biography are given here.

Marian Anderson (1897-1993) was an African-American contralto. She was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and was the oldest of three daughters. Her voice was discovered very early on, and she joined the children's choir of the Union Baptist church her family attended. She continued to sing in different neighbourhood churches, but when she tried to find a teacher for a formal singing education at the age of 18, she was denied access to the Philadelphia Music Academy and it turned out to be nearly impossible to find a teacher, because she was black. However, she did find teachers willing to accept her as a student, and with financial help provided by her church community she was able to obtain formal training. Her teachers were Mary Saunders Patterson, Agnes Reifsnnyder, and Giuseppe Boghetti. In 1927, she went to Europe for further studying and performing opportunities, amongst which were two concerts in Salzburg in 1935. These were, however, not included in the regular programme of the Salzburger Festspiele. Although it was never openly stated, she was banned by the festival authorities on grounds of her skin colour, and although the Archbishop of Salzburg, Dr Waitz had, unsuccessfully, tried to persuade the authorities to include her in the programme, they remained steadfast in their refusal. This situation already gave a foretaste of what was to happen in Washington, D.C., in 1939. In 1934, Sol Hurok became her manager, and he persuaded her to return to the United States. After a failed attempt in 1936, a second effort was made to schedule an appearance for Anderson in

Constitution Hall in Washington, D.C., for Easter Sunday of 1939. Constitution Hall was the largest concert venue in Washington, D.C., but it was managed and partly owned by the Daughters of the American Revolution (D.A.R.) and they had a “white artists only” clause in their rental contracts in place from 1931 until 1951, and won with 39 votes to one on upholding the clause in the case of Marian Anderson. After numerous efforts from various sides, including the executive secretary of the National Association for Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), Walter White, the treasurer of Howard University, V. D. Johnston, and Charles Houston, special counsel to the NAACP. The D.A.R.'s position on the matter also led to First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt's resignation from the D.A.R.. When it became clear that the D.A.R. would not yield on the issue, the search for another venue began. Although there were some ideas and possibilities, they all turned out to be unsuitable or, as with Constitution Hall, unavailable to a black artist. In the end, with the help of the Secretary of the Interior, Harold L. Ickes, and the patronage of President Franklin D. Roosevelt, an open air concert on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial was arranged. The symbolism of the site was taken into consideration, with the statue of Abraham Lincoln, who is often seen as one of the greatest presidents in the history of the United States and also holds a special position in the minds of African-Americans for the part he played in the freeing of slaves in the 19th century, overlooking the venue. The concert on Easter Sunday drew a crowd that is estimated at more than 75000 spectators, and the concert, which lasted only half an hour, was broadcast on the radio across the nation (biography cf. Keiler 181-218).

This concert was highly significant for the Civil Rights Movement, which is probably also one of the main reasons why it is featured so prominently in *The Time of our Singing*. The concert is very important for the novel for various reasons. Firstly, of course, because it constitutes the event where David and Delia meet. Further, not only the concert itself forms a central point for the novel, but also the site is revisited two more times throughout the novel. All three of the events located there are integral to the Civil Rights Movement, and the theme, and therefore also the history, of the Movement is constantly present throughout the novel. Moreover, at each of these events several of the characters of *The Time of our Singing* are present. Therefore, not only the presence of non-fictional musicians, but also the inclusion of historical events supports the creation of a fictional reality which is very close to the perceptions of the historical reality of the time.

In addition to the creation of reality, it is also noteworthy that, as with Albert Einstein and David Strom, one can see that there are some similarities between Marian Anderson and Delia Daley. Marian Anderson becomes Delia's role model and inspiration to become a singer; Marian Anderson's success and, to a certain degree, acceptance by society gives Delia hope to be able to achieve her goal to become a singer one day. Although there are very clear differences between the two women, it can still be said that the character of Delia Daley is inspired by the figure of Marian Anderson, just as David Strom is inspired by Albert Einstein.

Among the fictional musicians who appear in the novel, the black pianist and singer Wilson Hart, one of Jonah and Joseph's

fellow students during their time at Juilliard, is one of the more fleshed-out characters. He is the first friend Joseph makes on his own (cf. 173), and although they do not meet again, Joseph thinks about Wilson many times in his life, especially during his time as a bar pianist in Atlantic City (cf. 434f.). Wilson completed his teacher training in Georgia, and was told by his teachers to become a professional singer, yet what he really is passionate about is composing. He and Jonah get into regular fights about Wilson's composing style, which is exemplified in the following extract.

Time's arrow, for Jonah, now pointed mercilessly forward, toward total serialism or its paradoxical twin, pure chance. [...] 'Will, Will! What's with all the *beauty*? You'll kill us with kindness, man. Singlehandedly drag us back into the nineteenth century. What did the nineteenth century ever do for you, except wrap you up in chains?'
(174)

Wilson is especially fascinated by Spanish music, and in particular Joaquín Rodrigo's *Concierto de Aranjuez*. It was his conviction that a relationship between Spanish and African music existed, and he "wanted to bridge Gibraltar, to reunite Africa and Iberia, those twins separated at birth. He heard one coiled in the other, where [Joseph] could never hear any relation at all" (176). One of the most memorable scenes involving Wilson Hart is when he tells Joseph to sit down with him in a piano practice room to "make something happen" (186): they start improvising over Rodrigo's *Concierto*, and it is the first time that Joseph actively sits down to improvise. In this scene, Powers shows that there are different kinds of musicians, inasmuch as he places Joseph and Wilson at opposite ends of a scale: at one end, there is Joseph, who says of himself that "the

hardest printed music [comes] easier for [him] than the simplest indigo riff" (189). Joseph is one of the people who needs the notes, who is a brilliant musician, but who is rather an interpreter of pre-composed music than a person who creates music (cf. Grove "Composition"). Wilson is at the other end of the scale, depicted as someone who, on the one hand, is very passionate about creating and composing music but is not even especially good at it, and on the other hand, as someone whose improvisations are "out of the world," (189) as Joseph describes them.

To conclude, the array of musicians, fictional and non-fictional, portrayed in the novel has three functions. Firstly, the make up of the Strom family is reflected in the selection of musicians who are depicted. This means that, because race is a more central issue than Jewishness, more black musicians than Jewish musicians are presented in the novel. Secondly, the mixture of fictional and non-fictional musicians serve to frame the historical setting and therefore to create a fictional reality. And lastly, the different kinds of musicians — pianists, violinists, teachers, performers, and of course, mostly singers — who are portrayed in the novel, make the fact that the Strom boys are supposed to be growing up in very musically influenced surroundings more believable.

5.2 Music and its influence on the formation of identity

The relevance of classical music for the formation of identity in *The Time of our Singing* becomes apparent when one looks at the lives of Jonah, Joseph and Ruth. In the beginning, their

childhood is very sheltered and they grow up surrounded by classical music (with the few exceptions where elements of Jazz or Spirituals enter their parents' game of *Crazed Quotations*). Although David and, even more so, Delia, try to protect their children from the hostilities they encounter due to them being the children of an interracial couple, Jonah and Joseph notice that they are different, especially in comparison with their peers. For instance, when Delia forces them to go and play outside, they do not actually go to the park, out of fear of the other children, but hide out and sing together to calm themselves (cf. 10). For the two brothers, music seems to be all there is, and it is said that

[t]hey loved it too well, music. The boys shrugged off sandlot sports, [...] and neighborhood reenactments of the slaughter at Okinawa and Bastogne, preferring to flank their mother at the spinet.
(10)

This quotation in essence characterises their life until they leave to go to Boylston Academy. For them, music is a refuge, a place where they feel safe and not different. It is obvious from the beginning that they have a unique talent, a talent which is also shared by Ruth, and their parents encourage the development of this talent. As a consequence, they start to identify themselves through music from an early age onwards, because this is an area in which they both excel. It is often the case that if a person is particularly good at something, they use this aptitude to set themselves apart from others. Another factor which adds to the strong identification through music, and classical music in particular, of the Strom brothers is their unique situation growing up. As already mentioned, they are bullied on

the playground because of their skin colour and because they are different, which is also why they do not form any friendships with other children of the same age. Furthermore, their parents decide to home school them, partly because they are afraid that they would face too many difficulties in a public school, and partly because they think that, especially in the area of music, they could learn far more at home than in any school. Their parents both teach them according to their own strengths, and they very often use songs they make up as a method for teaching (cf. 516). However, because Jonah and Joseph do not attend school, and are only ever beaten and bullied by the children at the park, they end up leading a very isolated childhood. These childhood experiences have the effect that for both Jonah and Joseph, music, and classical music in particular, is always at the centre of their identity.

At Boylston Academy, as well as at Juilliard, they encounter different surroundings, where a love of classical music does not constitute a cause for exclusion amongst children, but where the children who are especially good at playing an instrument or singing are admired. This can also be observed in schools which have a focus on, for instance, music, and where all the children play instruments. Whereas in a regular school a pupil might be marginalised because they have to practice several hours a day and therefore cannot participate in all the social activities the others do, in a specialised school often a somewhat competitive climate emerges, because they all have a common activity, which often leads to the students trying to “out-practice” each other. In *The Time of our Singing*, Jonah and Joseph's time at Boylston Academy does mean that they

are for the first time alone but in close contact with children their own age, but at the same time, they again find themselves in a certain ivory-tower situation. Jonah is such an outstanding singer that even if he is different from the other students, he is in a certain way untouchable. The following extract shows his classmates' attitude towards Jonah, as well as it corroborates the hypothesis that a talent in music can indeed be an element in the formation of personal identities.

The Boylston students had better reasons than racial contamination to hate my brother. They'd come from all over the country, singled out for a musical skill that set them apart and gave them identity. Then Jonah came and made their wildest flights fall to earth and thump about, wounded. [...] But my brother had a way of lifting off, surprised at his own sound, that made even his enemies feel they ought to be his accomplices. (52)

However, neither Boylston Academy nor Juilliard represent the actual climate towards African-Americans in the United States at that time. At the schools, the boys continue to lead a sheltered life, with the interruption of the time of their mother's death. Although it is also a point where life changes for the brothers, it has even more impact on the development of Ruth's identity and character. In contrast to her brothers, she is not home schooled but attends a public school. There she forms ties to other African-American children and therefore has a different degree of socialisation than her brothers. Although it is pointed out several times, she has a remarkable voice, she never develops it fully, because her ties to classical music lie in her mother, and when Delia dies, this connection is severed. So vehemently, in fact, that after her mother's memorial service she simply turns her back on classical music and everything

related to it. Although she does sing during her life, it is never classical music, until Jonah's memorial service after his death, where she and Joseph perform "Bist du bei mir", just as they did at their mother's memorial (cf. 619f.). In the case of Ruth, her rejection of classical music leads to an alienation with the rest of her family, even if other factors are involved in the complications that develop between her and David.

A further issue is the difference between classical music and popular music, and how they are used in *The Time of our Singing*. One notices from the beginning that the novel is centred on Western art music, and although popular music cannot be completely disregarded, in the cases where it does appear in the novel, it is usually to demonstrate some sort of contrast. For instance, after Jonah leaves for Europe, Joseph has some difficulties finding his place on his own. He cannot find a position as an accompanist, for one part because of his skin colour, and for the other part because he finds that he cannot really play with anyone but his brother (cf. 429ff.). When he then finds a position as a bar pianist in Atlantic City, he finds himself confronted with a completely different world of music. At his audition he is asked to play The Beatles' "Yesterday", which he had never played before. His nervousness together with his years and years of classical training lead to "'Yesterday' [coming] out half Baroque figured bass and half ballpark organ [with Joseph's] uncertainty [covered] in a flurry of passing notes" (431). During his time playing at the bar Joseph begins to realise that "what most people wanted from music was not transcendence but simple companionship" (432), and it is exactly this juxtaposition of the canonized Western art music

with popular music which brings out the contrast between the exceptional situation of the Strom brothers and the United States as a country in upheaval.

6 Language and music

The Time of our Singing does not only have music as one of its central themes, but music also expands into the language of the novel. Two ways of connecting language and music will be discussed in the following section, namely the way music is described in the text, as well as music as an inspiration for literary figures.

In this novel, descriptions of music appear in different contexts and with various degrees of precision. Some of these portrayals are extremely detailed, with inclusions of note names or specific intervals to evoke the music in a trained reader's ear and in such a way that a musician could write down the notes, for instance as it is done in the rendition of the "Kyrie" from an unknown mass the Strom brothers hear at the cloisters as children (cf. 161). Another aspect is the near constant referring to musicians, works or musical genres by the narrator and the characters in the book. Furthermore, also technical aspects of a musician's life are elaborated upon, especially in the scenes depicting practice sessions or vocal lessons. One example of this can be found in the scene where Jonah has two different voice teachers side by side who are not supposed to know about each other. In that depiction, two of many vastly divergent approaches to singing, and to teaching to sing, are presented (189ff.). Furthermore, this provides an insight into an area of music which otherwise could not be observed by a reader who never had music lessons themselves.

The references to the more technical aspects of music making are manifold, not only are technical aspects of singing elaborated upon but also the processes involved in decoding a piece for performance, as it is done by professional musicians in order to uncover aspects not immediately obvious from the sheet music, is represented. In a description of the division of competences within *Voces Antiquae* it says that Joseph “did the structural analyses” while Jonah, amongst others, “led [the group] through a thicket of counterpoint” (536).

The range of references, the number of names, pieces and genres that are used are proof of the author’s understanding of music, as well as evidence for the profound role music plays in *The Time of our Singing*.

Aside from the above mentioned accounts of music, literary figures are also applied to composers, works and music in general. One literary figure used extensively in this context is *pars pro toto*, where names of composers are used to elicit associations with the musical genre they are most famous for, although in many cases it is not necessary that a piece by them is actually being heard or performed within the story. An example of this can be found in the description of sounds at Juilliard, where “Crusts of Chopin” (184) is used to evoke an image of the music in the room. Another figure which is used frequently is personification, where musical pieces are attributed features of living beings, as it is the case with Schubert’s *Trout*, which is described as swimming upstream (cf. 13). Lastly similes are often applied to music in general, as can be seen when the narrator likens “jazz” to “a wild two-week summer rental on the Strip” (199).

The predominant literary figure in *The Time of our Singing* regarding music and words is the use of musical metaphors, which are not only used in scenes connected directly to music but also to emphasize the general musical theme of the novel. In one instance the use of musical elements outside an explicitly musical context can be seen in the following example

'You must learn to listen,' [David] says. If particles, forces, and fields obey the curve that binds the flow of numbers, then they must sound like harmonies in time. '[...]
His colleagues dismiss this talk as mere metaphor.
(411)

Furthermore, metaphors are on occasion used to characterise people, for instance when the narrator refers to the audience of a concert as keeping a "major-key smile" (7). This metaphor works on two different levels, firstly it describes the fake smile of the audience, but secondly it can be related to the forced happiness which can be found in works by Haydn and his contemporaries, where although the text might speak of dark clouds and storms, the music is kept impertinently and constantly in major key signatures (cf. Haydn's *Die Jahreszeiten* "Die düst'ren Wolken").

As a way of describing their surroundings and musical development the author also uses a metaphor when he discusses the brothers' transition from Boylston to Juilliard. Their life at Boylston is depicted as "little Dittersdorf duets" (172), while Juilliard appears to be "an international *Symphony of a Thousand*" (172).

The usage of musical metaphors to portray human interaction is one more occurrence of this literary figure in the novel. At one

point the narrator depicts the effect silence in a dialogue has on William Daley as him being “frozen by that pianissimo” (425).

All of the abovementioned types of metaphors show how musical metaphors are used in the novel, aside from the parts that are directly about music. As the application of music on a structural level is evidence for its overarching influence on the novel as a whole, the literary figures used, on the very small scale of sentences and phrases remind the reader constantly of the role music plays in *The Time of our Singing*.

7 Conclusion

As it has been said in the introduction, a novel on its own is not a literary form which is per se entangled with music. However, this thesis shows how music can be essential to a novel and can be incorporated in a way that it constantly appears on different levels.

The smallest entities that were analysed were words, sentences and phrases, and upon closer inspection it becomes obvious that music is constantly referred to. The reader has to continuously deal with name of musicians, composers, works and genres being mentioned, often without any further explanation. Going beyond mere mentioning of musical terminology and technical vocabulary, rhetorical figures such as similes and metaphors are used to illustrate everyday life. Even character development is advanced through musical references. Furthermore, the sustained presence of music on the level of language contributes to the formation of an entity and it reinforces the important part music plays in the novel.

Music is not only omnipresent on a small scale in *The Time of our Singing*, but an underlying musical structure can be found throughout. The main musical elements are polyphony and counterpoint which appear in the structure of the chapters, as well as in the constant interplay of the themes music, race and, to a lesser extent, time. In addition, the form of theme and variation can be found in the constant recurrence of the themes race, music, and time. However, the proposition that the form of the rondo might also be used as a device for the structuring of the novel could not be proved.

Although the concept of the musicalization of fiction could not be fully implemented, evidence suggests that the reading of *The Time of our Singing* as an example of musicalized fiction is valid. The main limitation of Wolf's theory is that to fulfil the categories he deems most important, a text essentially has to be experimental and therefore it inherently excludes any work that does not stray from traditional narrative.

Moreover, it has been shown that the many pieces of music, composers, and musicians mentioned throughout are integral to the construction of identities as well as a fictional reality. One of the cornerstones of the creation of this reality is music, and the mentioned pieces of music, the appearance of historical figures and the novel's setting in non-fictional surroundings create an environment that supports the novel's realism.

One question that has remained unanswered is the importance of a reader's prior knowledge of music, and how extensive this knowledge has to be. Further research might explore how readers with varying levels of knowledge of music, and classical music in particular, read and react to *The Time of our Singing*.

In conclusion it can be said that the role of music in *The Time of our Singing* indeed far exceeds simple reference to it. Music is interwoven into the novel from beginning to end and beyond.

8 Table of figures

fig. 1 Wolf 70	27
fig. 2 Scher Typology (<i>Theory</i> 151)	30
fig. 3 Bach's Ciaccona D minor, bars 120-122	39
fig. 4 Ciaccona, bars 1-5.....	40
fig. 5 Ciaccona, bars 120-122 (split)	41
fig. 6 Wolf 83	48
fig. 7 Table <i>The Time of our Singing</i> as musicalized fiction	55
fig. 8 Reher cf. 282	68

9 Bibliography

Arnold, Denis, et al. "form." *The Oxford Companion to Music*. Ed. Alison Latham. *Oxford Music Online*. 29 June 2011
<<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/opr/t114/e2624>>.

Benson, Stephen. *Literary Music: Writing Music in Contemporary Fiction*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006.

Cole, Malcolm S. "Rondo." *Grove Music Online*. *Oxford Music Online*. 29 June 2011
<<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/23787>>.

"Counterpoint." *The Oxford Dictionary of Music*, 2nd ed. rev. Ed. Michael Kennedy. *Oxford Music Online*. 29 June 2011
<<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/opr/t237/e2498>>.

Dewey, Joseph. *Understanding Richard Powers*. Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2002.

-----, "Little Knots, Tied in the Clothing of Time: *The Time of Our Singing* as a Dual-Time Narrative." *Intersections: Essays on Richard Powers*. Eds. Stephen J. Burn and Peter Dempsey. Champaign: Dalkey Archive Press, 2008.

Dowland, John. "Time Stands Still" in *The Third and Last Booke of Songs or Aires*. 1603. Ed. Diana Poulton. London: Brian Jordan Early Music Centre Publications. 1985.

-----, "Time Stands Still" in *John Dowland. Fifty Songs. Book 2*. Eds. Edmund H. Fellowes and David Scott. London: Stainer & Bell Ltd. 1971.

"Form." *The Oxford Dictionary of Music*, 2nd ed. rev. Ed. Michael Kennedy. *Oxford Music Online*. 29 June 2011.
<<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/opr/t237/e3890>>.

"Fugue." *The Oxford Dictionary of Music*, 2nd ed. rev. Ed. Michael Kennedy. *Oxford Music Online*. 29 June 2011.
<<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/opr/t237/e4041>>.

Gilman, Sander L. "Einstein's Violin: Jews and the Performance of Identity". *Modern Judaism* 25.3 (2005): 219-236.

Goethe, Johann Wolfgang v. "Der Erlkönig" 1782. 17 October 2011.
<<http://gutenberg.spiegel.de/buch/3670/231>>

Keiler, Allan. *Marian Anderson: A Singer's Journey*. New York: Scribner, 2000.

Kelly, Thomas F. *Early Music: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: OUP, 2011.

Lockwood, Lewis, et al. "Palestrina, Giovanni Pierluigi da." In *Grove Music Online*. Oxford Music Online. 27 June 2011.
<<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/20749>>

Petri, Horst. *Literatur und Musik: Form- und Strukturparallelen*. Göttingen: Sachse und Pohl, 1964.

Powers, Richard. *The Time of our Singing*. London: Vintage Books, 2004.

"race". Oxford Dictionaries. April 2010. Oxford Dictionaries. April 2010. Oxford University Press. 29 June 2011.
<<http://oxforddictionaries.com/definition/race--2?rkey=Ur8u3G&result=2>>

"race". The Oxford Dictionary of English (revised edition). Ed. Catherine Soanes and Angus Stevenson. Oxford University Press, 2005. Oxford Reference Online. Oxford University Press. Universitätsbibliothek Wien. 14 September 2010
<<http://www.oxfordreference.com/views/ENTRY.html?subview=Main&entry=t140.e63483>>

Reher, Meike. *Die Darstellung von Musik im zeitgenössischen englischen und amerikanischen Bildungsroman: Peter Ackroyd, Vikram Seth, Richard Powers, Frank Conroy, Paul Auster*. Europäische Hochschulschriften, Reihe XIV Angelsächsische Sprache und Literatur, Bd. 453. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2010.

Rimmon-Kenan, Shlomith. *Narrative Fiction: Contemporary Poetics*. 2nd ed. London: Routledge, 2002.

Scher, Steven Paul. "Literature and Music." *Interrelations of Literature*. Eds. Jean-Pierre Barricelli and Joseph Gibaldi. New York: The Modern Language Association of America, 182. 225-250.

-----, "Notes toward a Theory of Verbal Music." *Comparative Literature* 22.2 (1970): 147-156.

-----, *Verbal Music in German Literature*. New Haven: Yale UP, 1968.

Schubert, Franz. "Der Erlkönig". 1815. 18 November 2011.
<[http://imslp.org/wiki/Erlkönig,_D.328_\(Op.1\)_\(Schubert,_Franz\)](http://imslp.org/wiki/Erlkönig,_D.328_(Op.1)_(Schubert,_Franz))>

Shockley, Alan. *Music in the Words: Musical Form and Counterpoint in the Twentieth-Century Novel*. Surrey: Ashgate, 2009.

Sisman, Elaine. "Variations." *Grove Music Online*. *Oxford Music Online*. 29 June 2011
<<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/29050>>.

Smyth, Gerry. *Music in Contemporary British Fiction: Listening to the Novel*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008.

Vice, Sue. *Introducing Bakhtin*. Manchester: Manchester UP, 1997.

Whittall, Arnold. "counterpoint." *The Oxford Companion to Music*. Ed. Alison Latham. *Oxford Music Online*. 29 June 2011
<<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/opr/t114/e1670>>.

Wolf, Werner. *The Musicalization of Fiction: A Study in the Theory and History of Intermediality*. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1999.

"Time". *Britannica: The New Encyclopædia Britannica*, Volume 28, *Macropædia — Knowledge in Depth*. 15th Edition.

<<http://www-pao.ksc.nasa.gov/kscpao/history/gemini/gemini.htm>>. 21 February 2011.

Marian Anderson: A Life in Song. Annenberg Rare Book & Manuscript Library, University of Pennsylvania. 5 June 2011.
<<http://www.library.upenn.edu/exhibits/rbm/anderson/>>

<<http://www.music.princeton.edu/~alan/>>. 20 June 2011.

<<http://wordmusicstudies.org/member.htm>>. 20 June 2011.

10 Appendix

Der Erbkönig

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Wer reitet so spät durch Nacht und Wind?
Es ist der Vater mit seinem Kind;
Er hat den Knaben wohl in dem Arm,
Er faßt ihn sicher, er hält ihn warm.

"Mein Sohn, was birgst du so bang dein Gesicht?"
"Siehst, Vater, du den Erbkönig nicht?
Den Erbkönig mit Kron und Schweif?"
"Mein Sohn, es ist ein Nebelstreif."

"Du liebes Kind, komm, geh mit mir!
Gar schöne Spiele spiel' ich mit dir;
Manch' bunte Blumen sind an dem Strand,
Meine Mutter hat manch gülden Gewand."

"Mein Vater, mein Vater, und hörest du nicht,
Was Erbkönig mir leise verspricht?"
"Sei ruhig, bleibe ruhig, mein Kind;
In dürren Blättern säuselt der Wind."

"Willst, feiner Knabe, du mit mir gehn?
Meine Töchter sollen dich warten schön;
Meine Töchter führen den nächtlichen Reihn,
Und wiegen und tanzen und singen dich ein."

"Mein Vater, mein Vater, und siehst du nicht dort
Erbkönigs Töchter am düstern Ort?"
"Mein Sohn, mein Sohn, ich seh es genau:
Es scheinen die alten Weiden so grau."

"Ich liebe dich, mich reizt deine schöne Gestalt;
Und bist du nicht willig, so brauch ich Gewalt."
"Mein Vater, mein Vater, jetzt faßt er mich an!
Erbkönig hat mir ein Leids getan!"

Dem Vater grauset's, er reitet geschwind,
Er hält in Armen das ächzende Kind,
Erreicht den Hof mit Müh' und Not;
In seinen Armen das Kind war tot.

AUSGEWÄHLTE LIEDER.

1. Erlkönig. Goethe.

Op. 1.

59. *Schnell. (♩ = 152.)*

Wer rei - tet so spät durch Nacht und

Wind? Es ist der Va - ter mit sei - - nem

Edition Peters.

9023

Kind; er hat den Kna - - ben wohl in dem

Arm, er faßt ihn si-cher, er hält ihn warm.

Mein Sohn, was

birgst du so bang dein Ge - sicht? Siehst,

cresc. *f* *(pp)*

Va - - ter, du den Erl - kö - nig nicht?

den Er - - len - kö - nig mit Kron und

p *mf*

Schweif?— Mein Sohn, es ist ein Ne - belstreif.

„Du lie - - - bes Kind, komm,

depress. *pp*

geh mit mir! gar schö - - - ne

Spie - - le spiel - ich mit dir; manch

bun - - - te Blu - - men sind an dem

Strand, mei-ne Mut - ter hat manch gül - - - den Ge-wand.“— Mein

Va - ter, mein Va-ter, und hö - rest du nicht, was Er-len-kö-nig mir lei - se ver-

spricht?— Sei ru-hig, blei-be ru-hig, mein Kind: in dür-ren

Blättern säuselt der Wind.— „Willst, fei - ner Kna - be, du mit mir gehn? mei-ne

Töch - ter sol - len dich war - ten schön; meine Töch - ter füh - ren den nächt - li-chen Reihn und

wie - gen und tan - zen und sin - gen dich ein, sie wie - gen und tan - zen und sin - gen dich ein.
 Mein Va - ter, mein Va - ter, und siehst du nicht dort Erl -
 kö - nigs Töch - ter am dü - stern Ort? — Mein Sohn, mein
 Sohn, ich seh es ge - nau, es schei - nen die al - ten Wei - den so
 grau. — „Ich
 lie - be dich, mich reizt dei - ne schö - ne Ge - stalt, und bist du nicht

ff *p* *cresc.* *decresc.*

wie - gen und tan - zen und sin - gen dich ein, sie wie - gen und tan - zen und sin - gen dich ein.

Mein Va - ter, mein Va - ter, und siehst du nicht dort Erl -

kö - nigs Töch - ter am dü - stern Ort? — Mein Sohn, mein

Sohn, ich seh es ge - nau, es schei - nen die al - ten Wei - den so

grau. — „Ich

lie - be dich, mich reizt dei - ne schö - ne Ge - stalt, und bist du nicht

wil - lig, so brauch ich Ge - walt.“ „Mein Va - ter, mein Va - ter, jetzt
 faßt er mich an! Erl - kö - nig hat mir ein Leids ge -
 tan!“ — Dem Va - - ter grau-set's, er rei - tet ge -
 schwind, er hält in Ar - men das äch - zen - de
 Kind, er - reicht den Hof mit Müh und
 Not; in sei-nen Ar-men das Kind war tot.

accelerando
cresc.
ff
Recit.
Andante.
pp

Edition Peters. 9023

TIME STANDS STILL

Rather slow

VOICE

mf

Time stands still with gaz - ing on her —
 When For-tune, Love and Time at - tend on —

mf

f

face, Stand still and gaze, for min - utes, — hours — and
 her, Her with my for - tunes, love, and — time — I

f

p

years, to her give place. All o - ther things shall change but
 hon - our will a - lone. If blood-less En - vy say Du -

p

f

© Copyright 1925 and 1971 by Stainer and Bell Ltd

she — re — mains the same, Till hea-vens chang - ed
-ty — hath no de - sert, Du - ty re - plies that

have their — course, and Time hath lost his — name.
En - vy — knows her - self his faith - ful — heart.

Cu - pid doth ho - ver up and — down blind - ed with her fair eyes,
My set-tled vows and spot - less — faith no for - tune can re - move;

cresc. And For-tune, cap - tive at her feet, con-temned and — con - quer'd lies.
Cour-age shall show my in - ward faith, and faith shall — try my love.

II.

CANTVS.



Time stands still with ga-zing on her face,

stand still and gaze for minutes, houres and yeares, to her giue place: All other things shall change,

but shee remains the same, till heauens changed haue their course & time hath lost his name.

Cupid doth houer vp and downe blinded with her faire eyes, and fortune captiue at her

feete contem'd and conquerd lies.

11 Index

A

Anderson, Marian, 9, 10, 11, 12, 20, 65,
66, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 107, 108
associative quotation, 16, 17, 49, 52, 53,
56, 62, 71

B

Bach, Johann Sebastian, 5, 16, 23, 40,
41, 62, 82, 105
Bakhtin, Mikhael, 39
Benson, Stephen, 32, 33

C

construction of reality, 2, 3, 22, 80
counterpoint, 3, 19, 34, 38, 39, 40, 43, 58,
67, 79, 100, 103

D

Dowland, John, 53, 55, 71, 73, 74, 77, 81,
85

E

Erl-King, The, 53, 83, 84

F

formal and structural analogies, 30, 37
Fugue, 12, 29, 67

I

*International Association for Word and
Music Studies*, 26

M

musicalization of fiction, 27, 29, 30, 47,
50, 56, 57, 104
musico-literary intermediality, 27, 28, 47

P

paratext, 52
paratextual thematization, 15, 50
Petri, Horst, 32
polyphony, 3, 35, 36, 38, 39, 40, 42, 44,
67, 70, 71, 74, 77, 79, 81, 82, 103
Powers, Richard, 2, 4, 5, 17, 29, 32, 35, 49,
56, 59, 62, 67, 92

R

Reher, Meike, 35, 67, 68, 69, 80, 105
rondo, 3, 38, 66, 103

S

Scher, Steven Paul, 3, 27, 30, 31, 32, 37,
45, 46, 47, 105
Schubert, Franz, 53, 83, 100
Shockley, Alan, 34, 35, 40
Smyth, Gerry, 33, 34

T

The Time of our Singing, 2, 4, 5, 6, 11, 15,
19, 20, 22, 23, 29, 32, 35, 39, 47, 48, 50,
53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 66, 67, 68, 69,
70, 78, 80, 81, 82, 83, 85, 86, 88, 91, 93,
95, 97, 99, 100, 101, 102, 103, 104, 105
theme and variation, 3, 37, 59, 103
Time Stands Still, 53, 55, 73, 81

V

verbal music, 30, 31, 32, 45, 46, 47
Vice, Sue, 39

W

Wolf, Werner, 3, 15, 16, 17, 26, 27, 28, 29,
30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 44, 45, 46, 47,
48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58,
62, 104, 105
word music, 30, 32, 45, 46, 47, 54, 55, 56

Abstracts

Richard Powers' novel *The Time of our Singing* tells the story of two mixed-race, musician brothers over the course of the second half of the twentieth century. In this thesis the ways of incorporating music into a prose text has been examined on the basis of Powers' novel. It is argued that the role of music exceeds mere referencing and is essential for the novel's plot, language and structure. This deep connection was found on the levels of language, the creation of a fictional reality and the structure of the novel. In this connection especially the possibility of creating polyphonic aspects in a prose text were examined. The paper's theoretical framework was based on Werner Wolf's *The Musicalization of Fiction* and Steven Paul Scher's *A Theory of Verbal Music*, and the applicability of Wolf's system for the identification of musicalized fiction was tested. This thesis includes examples from sheet music.

Richard Powers Roman *The Time of our Singing* handelt von zwei Brüdern jüdischer und afroamerikanischer Abstammung und deren Leben als Musiker in der zweiten Hälfte des 20. Jahrhunderts. In dieser Arbeit wurden die Formen, wie Musik in einem Prosatext verarbeitet werden kann anhand des Romans analysiert, und es wird argumentiert, dass Musik die Rolle eines rein inhaltlichen Elements übersteigt und unverzichtbar für die Sprache, Struktur und Handlung ist. Diese Verbindung konnte auf den Ebenen der Realitätsbildung, der Sprachverwendung und dem Aufbau des Romans nachgewiesen werden, wobei ein besonderes Augenmerk auf die Möglichkeit der Einbindung kontrapunktischer und polyphoner Komponenten in der Prosa gelegt wurde. Die theoretische Grundlage für die Arbeit bilden Werner Wolfs *The Musicalization of Fiction* und Steven Paul Schers *A Theory of Verbal Music*, wobei auch die Anwendbarkeit von Wolfs Konzept von „musicalized fiction“ auf nicht von ihm behandelte Texte überprüft wurde. Die Arbeit enthält Notenbeispiele.

Curriculum Vitae

Persönliche Daten

Name	Maria Valencia Cuberos
Geburtsdatum	24. Dezember 1985
Email	mvalenciacuberos@gmail.com

Ausbildung

2004 – 2011	Studium der Anglistik und Amerikanistik an der Universität Wien
2009	Umstieg auf Masterstudium „Anglophone Literatures and Cultures“
2005 – 2006	Studium Musikwissenschaften an der Universität Wien
2003 – 2004	Studium Interkulturelle Kommunikation an der Universität Wien
1994 – 2003	Musikgymnasium Neustiftgasse, 1070 Wien Matura Juni 2003
1994 – 1992	Volksschule Pfeilgasse, 1080 Wien
1992 – 1990	Volksschule Halirschgasse

Berufserfahrung

2004 – 2009, 2011 –	Hilfskraft bei den Büchereien der Stadt Wien
2006 – 2010	Mitarbeiterin bei zahlreichen wissenschaftlichen Kongressen
2004 –	Freie Übersetzungs- und Lektoratstätigkeit
2001 –	Freie Musikerin (Viola da gamba, Gesang)

Sprachkenntnisse

Deutsch	Muttersprache
Spanisch	2. Muttersprache
Englisch	Niveau C2
Französisch	Niveau A2
Serbisch	Niveau A1